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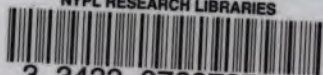
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An illustration of a woman in profile, facing left. She is wearing a long, flowing red dress with a dark, intricate pattern. Her right arm is extended forward, and her left hand is near her waist. The background of the illustration is dark with some horizontal lines. The entire illustration is set against a dark, textured book cover.

YOUNG HOWSON'S WIFE

A. E. WATROUS



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YOUNG HOWSON'S WIFE

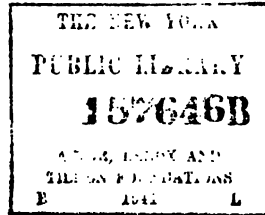
Young Howson's Wife

BY
A. E. WATROUS

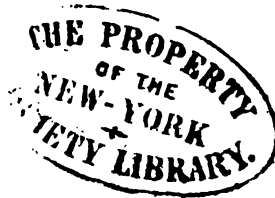


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To
D. H. M.



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Young Howson's Wife



YOUNG Howson's wife is
dead since yesterday.
There was a child three

The Return
to Nature of a
Soul "au
Naturel"

days old, and it is dead too. They
had been married a year. Young Howson is a
well-meaning young fellow, but he made a queer
mess of it in this marriage. He told me about it
to-night. He sent for me, because he was per-
plexed and wanted me to explain how it was that
things had gone so utterly wrong.

Of course, I couldn't tell him. There was no
reason why I couldn't tell him but this: he couldn't
understand it. I turned it over in my mind in
a dozen ways while he was telling the story, for I
saw almost as soon as he began what the matter
was, but I couldn't find any form of words to show
him how it was that his marriage with Priscilla
Hubert had turned out so wretchedly. He was
really anxious to know if he had done wrong. He
couldn't see how things could have happened so
unless some one was at fault. I could only assure
him that he had been in no fault, except to have
been born in Philadelphia in the last half of
the nineteenth century. He couldn't understand

what I meant. I left him dazed and smoking in his house on Nineteenth Street. His dead wife and child were in a room overhead. I am quite sure that he went up there again to look at them and try to find out where the trouble had been.

It seems as if all that white unearthliness and beauty must have told him. Yet, I am sure it didn't. I am sure it only left him perplexed and scared and dimly conscious of something in life and death of which he knew nothing, and that he went back to his room and sat up and tried his best to remember something he had done which he could call wrong according to his code and that of his kind—some reason for his young wife's having always been nearly as cold to him as she was now—but infinitely less content in his neighborhood.

He will find nothing, although he sits up till the parson and the hearse are at his door. There is nothing wrong about young Howson. He is like all young fellows—kind-hearted, well-mannered, and simple-natured. He is twenty-six years old and has a good bit of money in his own right. He has a round, pleasant face, and little whiskers on the sides of it. He has a round, frank eye and white teeth. He has a little fringe of hair on his forehead, and half an inch back of it he begins to part the hair of his head. He wears a high collar and a black cravat before dinner, and a high collar and a white tie at dinner. The coat he wears be-

fore dinner is called a frock, and the coat he wears after dinner is known by divers names, among them "swallow-tail" and "claw-hammer." There is a great difference between the two kinds of coats. It was after dinner when we looked in to-night upon that awful, still picture of maternity in death, and, therefore, young Howson wore the latter kind of a coat. Young Howson attends to these matters of coats because it is part of the law of nature to him. At the same time he sometimes acts from principle, not instinct. I am quite certain that he curtailed, by his example two years ago, the extravagant length to which the bell-crowned beaver was running, and that at the present time he exerts the same conservative influence in reactionary tendencies toward the chimney pot.

When I called on him to-night he said: "Old man, I wanted to see you. I thought you might be able to explain something to me. You always were cleverer than I."

This was young Howson's formula whenever he asked my advice. It is not a strictly necessary formula, and I generally laugh at it; but to-night of course laughing was out of the question. "There's something wrong," the young man went on; "something that's been wrong, and I don't know how to get at it. It's queer," he continued, "it seems as if I had been figuring as a brutal husband, and I can't make out how I have been. I don't believe in such things, anyway, except in

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books and among low people. At least I never knew of but one case, and that was Larry Poundel. He used to drink too much, and I guess his wife gave him as good as he sent—and she was no earthly use anyway. I used to be ashamed of her, for my part, and I had very little to do with her compared with some fellows.

“Well, my wife was afraid of me—deathly afraid. You’ve seen us together, haven’t you? Nothing unusual about us, eh? No. Well, she was afraid of me from the start—deathly. She acted all the time we lived together as if she feared I was going to do something to her. She often looked at me so that I’ve often gone to the glass to see if I had a hump or horns on my forehead or anything beastly about me. She concealed this, of course, in public, but it was there all the time. It’s queer.”

Young Howson looked out of the window at the bare lilac tree in the court. He drew a penknife from his pocket and filed his nails abstractedly before he went on. This I took for a sign of agitation, for his nails always came perfect from his dressing-room, and I knew he would only spoil them by filing them. Besides, in an undisturbed mental state, he would consider it making a part of his toilet in a manner in public. “I’ve thought I might have been tight,” he said suddenly. “I mean tight when we were married. I’ve known fellows so when they were married. But I wasn’t.

I look back and I remember that I took especial pains not to be. I was afraid of the impression it might leave. I knew she was shy; I knew she was just out of school. I knew she would be shocked if I appeared anyway off. I knew she was different from the girls who had been out much. That was why she was a great relief. Why, those flirting old widows and young married women used to make me sick, 'pon my word, after I met her—women, by gad, that most young fellows would just as leave be talked about with—and that was why I knew I wasn't even what she'd call tight. I mean by that, any different from usual—spoke a bit louder or faster, or laughed easy. So I just acted as if I'd met her at some one's house and was glad to see her.

“But she was changed as soon as we were alone. She was frightened—frightened to death. I know what frightened to death means, too. I saw a stag once, just before he was shot in Lake Saranac, come right alongside of my boat, and his eyes looked like hers, only hers were blue, and I've never gone in for that sort of thing since. I saw this, I say, and I went out on the balcony to smoke—it was at Newport—till the light was out. Well, sir, I waked up in the middle of the night, and she was out on the balcony where I'd been. She'd put on a long blue wrapper, and her hair was in a long yellow braid down the back, like schoolgirls wear.

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"It was very still. You could just hear the waves, and there was waltz music on a yacht in the harbor away off. She was looking out on the bay. It was moonlight, and I could see it shine through the little fuzz of rumpled hair about her forehead. She turned around once, and I could see the same frightened look come into her eyes again. Then there happened something queer. When she turned toward the water again I heard her say, 'I wish I could pray.' She said it in a distracted kind of a way, as if praying was the only thing to do and she didn't know how to do it. Now, that was queer. What would she want to pray for, and why the deuce—I'll take that back; it isn't right, I suppose, to swear about praying—but why couldn't she pray? She could pray fast enough other times. She used to say her prayers every night and morning, and went to St. Surplice's about twice a day, I should think."

The deepening shadows of the night hid my face and the smile on it. But I shouldn't have smiled at young Howson. There is no reason why he should see what nobody sees, that I know of. It strikes me that people don't see that they have lost their conception of what they are praying for—that they have no idea of it in their minds. Perhaps they have some dim consciousness of it, though, and that is the reason why they pray out into space the harder. Perhaps there is no reason why our women go to church more and

more. Our mothers used to go twice on Sunday, and our wives go three times a week. Perhaps that is why other people have bigger camp meetings every year and shout harder. I do not know why it is. I am a man in a club window, I may say, and not a theologian, but I think I see the truth in these matters, as any man will who knows his kind.

At any rate it seemed clear to me that this was the trouble with Priscilla Hubert; that she had come into a new condition of affairs in which she was frightened, and she had been taught to pray at a mark (if it is not indecent to say that, I think it expresses what I mean best), when there was no particular need of praying, and when there was need she didn't know what to do. An Englishman, a hussar officer, who was over there a while ago, told me that the Russian soldiers in the Crimea were overdrilled, that they would do just as they had been trained to do on the parade ground, and didn't know what to do when an enemy acted different from a target. I think Priscilla was overdrilled.

Young Howson, who had paused, went on: "When people were around, of course, it wasn't so bad, but in those few weeks it was always the same when we were alone, although after a month or two it wasn't so noticeable."

"How did your wife amuse herself?" I asked.

"If you mean," he replied slowly, "that she

liked some one else, you are mistaken. I thought of that, but it wasn't so."

"I didn't mean that," I answered. "I wouldn't have said it if I had. But now you have opened the subject of your wife's likes and dislikes, and you want my advice, why did she marry you?"

"Well now, old man, you know pretty well how that is. I ain't bragging at all when I say that most any one would have married me. I behaved myself and I had money, and my people have been just about where they are now ever since Richard Penn's time. I haven't any reason to suppose that she was particularly in love with me, and it is absurd to imagine that she was in any way forced into marrying me. There was no need of that with her people, but I suppose that she understood that she was to marry some time, and she couldn't find any better chance. As to her amusements," he continued, "people to be amused have to drive and dance and listen to bands and go to the opera, where there is one, and play tennis, some of them, and I don't know that any of it's very giddy fun, but she did all of these things, as other people do, only she didn't care much for such things. And her brother Archie used to tease her awfully," he continued, with a woe-begone smile, "about the way she handled a racket."

"Your wife read?"

"Yes, and queer books. There are some of them."

He pointed to some volumes on the lower shelf of a bookcase in the room. Eighteenth-century literature part of it—Goldsmith's "Vicar," "Rasselas" and a tome or two of Miss Austen's heavy triviality. There were some "High Church" novels, too, of Miss Younge, Saints' Day calendar and peerage variety, and I saw a little-known novel of George MacDonald's, "The Portent," a book which would be called sensational in its character, but one of the purest and sweetest love stories I ever read.

"Queer books," continued young Howson. "Standard, I know. I ain't a fool, old man. My mother made me read that blessed 'Happy Valley' when I was a kid. But what a lot of unreal people in those sort of things—a lot of old phantoms."

"She loved flowers, too," the widower went on. In the darkness I heard a sob. "D—n it, old man," choked young Howson. "I have heard her sing over her flowers—sing like her canary, only her voice was a better contralto than Marie's, and a canary's nothing but a beastly whistle anyway. I'd hear her sing, I say, and she'd stop when she saw me. But what's the matter, old man? What was the matter? I'm telling the truth—I ain't lying. I can't think of anything I did to make her hate me."

This wild outburst from a young man who would as soon have thought of riding in the park *à la* Mazeppa as of showing his grief under ordinary

circumstances, was, I confess, painful in the extreme.

"We dragged about from pillar to post," the young man went on, wearily, "always the same. She seemed to care very little for other people when we were among them. When we were alone she dreaded me. Newport and the Catskills, New York and Washington, and here it was just the same."

Young Howson looked out intently to where the bare lilac trees swayed in the November wind. He fumbled with his watch-chain and drew his knees up under his chin, crushing his shirt-front.

"For the last few months," he continued musingly, "it has been worse and worse. She went around looking at me as if I had injured her in some way that I couldn't make up. I left her alone as much as I could, but we had to be seen together. Otherwise people would talk, and we hadn't even a reason to give them something to talk about. The thing was so deuced intangible, even, that I couldn't ask her what the matter was. Lately, she was in a dumb horror, as if she was going to be shot and it was all my fault. And when," he continued, "the child was born, and I went to see it, she looked at me as if I was a murderer—and she didn't care a hang for the child, either." The young man's voice broke into a high note like a wail, and he ceased speaking.

We sat silent in the dark. He had his per-

plexed sense of injury to keep him silent and sorrowful. I had the feeling of the first person who comes to the scene of a murder or other tragedy and hears the story from the eye-witnesses to keep me still. Young Howson could not see the lonely horror of Priscilla's fate—awaiting, in mystified anticipation, a trial coming unwelcome, unbid, uncomprehended, a horrid accident, in fact, which is trial enough when, to one sustained by love and hope, it comes an invited guest.

"They are upstairs," said young Howson at length. We went up. The dim death-light burned in the room, with its thick portieres and rugs, its widely polished wainscoting, its slim and graceful brass fixtures and mountings, its rare paintings and prints.

A woman sat by the bed and rocked drowsily. The dead wife's dainty watch ticked tinily on her bureau. The cheek of the girl-mother and the baby girl touched, and matched each other alike in that sweetly human softness of the flesh of women and children which has been likened time out of mind to velvet and rose petals, but which is far more delicate—alike, also, in the deathly pallor. One baby hand, too, touched the mother's cheek as children like to do when they sleep. Priscilla's slim wrists were folded in a frill of lace about the infant's tiny knees. I had not noticed before what an almost spirit-like ethereality of outline there was in Priscilla's brows and nostrils, nor

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what a ghostly lustre in her golden hair, like the lustre of the hair of the poet's wife that grew in the grave. There was an ineffable purity of that dead embrace, a doubly awful sanctity of the mystery of motherhood and the mystery of death.

"I can't make it out, old man," said young Howson, as we left the room. "I thought that if there was nothing really wrong about one of 'em that two people could live together."

I did not answer immediately. As I took my hat I said: "You sent to ask me if I could find out where you had been at fault. I am sure you cannot blame yourself for anything. If your wife had lived things would doubtless have come out all right."

"Do you think so?" he said. "Perhaps—good-night."

No, I did not think so. But where one cannot make the truth plain, it is cheapest and easiest to lie. I could not have made young Howson understand—perhaps I can make no one understand—that were a flower from God's garden, if that figure makes my meaning plain—that is to say, a soul which has somehow remained *au naturel* in its pristine and normal and unworldly state—should be transplanted and try to strike root amid the dry-rot of our time and place, then it shall surely die.

When young Howson's time of probation is over, when the weed comes off his hat and he is again seen in the assemblies and such places, I have no

doubt that he will blab his story into some sympathizing woman's ear as he blabbed it into mine. She will console him, and he will hardly be able to make a mistake again for the reason of this world's paucity of subjects for such mistakes.

But I think that, aside from questions of rent and coal bills, I should never marry. When I think of the possibilities of havoc conferred by matrimony, even as a man whose limitations in the way of positive action are set by the substitution of a white tie after dinner for a black cravat before dinner, I shudder.

Oliver Mendwell's Wife



OMEWHERE in Thackeray Some Results of the Expunging of the Word "Male"

—I think it is that part of
"Esmond" where Lady
Castlewood, who has had

smallpox, discovers that her husband no longer loves her—it is written: "We refit our shattered ships; when the palace burns we take refuge in the barn."

It is a comforting thing to think of. I suppose that life will go on with my wife and myself with only one difference, one exception, though a large one. There will be a broken string, a discordant note on the keyboard, which will leave the harmony incomplete. Very well, then, we must refrain from touching it.

It is about eighteen months ago that my wife said to me at breakfast, in what was intended to be an offhand way: "I am going to Canary's this afternoon."

"Eh?" I answered, astonishedly. Everybody knows who knows anything that Canary's is to the New York of this end of the century what Almack's was to the London of the other end. It is

the assembly rooms of high fashion. Here is the one place where the occupants of the inner circle of all the circles, the *cors cordium* of the mode, permits itself to breathe freely without a fear of inhaling a single suspicion of the contaminated air of the outside world. Here alone it never draws its skirts aside, confident that all the other skirts that sweep Canary's floor are worthy at least of contact. Here this sublimely isolated class dances, dresses dolls, and sells doylies for charity. Here also it takes its intellectual diversion, such as readings, lectures, and the like—when it is pleased to think it thinks. The entrance is masked. No vulgar sign, of course, betrays the use of the building, which looks like a huge and ugly private house. To those who look from its windows most of the clubs and all the restaurants on the avenue are peopled with a scrambling, indiscriminate, nameless horde, as impossible of acquaintance as a mob of excursionists would be to a Newport "cottager."

So both fear and wonder smote my heart when my wife told me that she was going to Canary's. "It's that infernal Eulalia ball," I thought to myself, for which I had managed to get a ticket through the good offices of an eminent Cuban tobacconist, a client of mine in a Custom House case. "Well," I said, with an effort to be gay, "this flat won't do any more. We'll have to take a whole house. Tell me," I said, "does the 150

become the 151 or the 152? Is your husband also to be a 'fashionable personage'?"

"I have often asked your sister," answered my wife, "where you got your vulgar streak—your way of looking at such things from the point of view of the comic paragrapher. I am not prepared to admit that anybody I shall meet at Canary's is any better than I. In fact, there is a painful lack of colonial families in that set."

My wife's great-grandfather was in Mr. Madison's Cabinet, you must know. Most people have forgotten his name, but she is not one of them. "However," she went on, "this has nothing to do with fashionable matters. I have received a card signed by Mrs. Lowe Joak, Mrs. Thrussle Wise, and a lot of other people asking me to attend a conference called to advance the movement to strike the word 'male' out of the Constitution."

Fear for the dear woman's sanity possessed my mind at once. "Attend a conference." "Advance the movement." Never in her decent, orderly, womanly life had she used such words before. Much rather would I have heard her swear. It was pathetic. It made me think of Ophelia falling in her madness into the singing of ribald songs. I had finished my breakfast and rose from the table. On my way to the mantelpiece for a match I stopped and patted her hair. "My dear," I said, "we will take that house which

you liked for the summer. The one at Tarrytown, you know."

My wife stirred uneasily under the touch of my hand. "Don't muss my hair, please," she said, somewhat acidly. "I can't see what a house at Tarrytown has to do with this conference. The house can wait."

"Oh! Sophy, Sophy, you little hypocrite," I cried reproachfully. "Do you mean to say that you are going to their place to advance movements and strike out males? You, a Southerner, with your notions about 'delicacy,' who wouldn't be seen shopping in the afternoon or ride in an open street car. You going in for woman's rights. It's absurd. Ah, that I should have lived to see the day when my wife has 'social aspirations'!"

My wife's finger-tips beat a vexed little tattoo on the breakfast table. "I have said," she retorted, "that I do not expect to meet anybody better than myself at Canary's."

"That would be impossible," I said, with a bow. "But you expect to meet them oftener, eh, Sophy?"

My wife left the room with a great swishing of her morning gown, and I went to my office. That evening at dinner harmony was restored, I confess, by my evincing a sneaking interest in the great people she had seen. I liked to hear her talk about them, and I felt pride in mentally comparing her dress and demeanor with those of the women she had met and told me of. She brought

back a petition with her for the excision of the word male. I resolutely refused to sign it, but she got the janitor to put his name down, and also prevailed over both the elevator boys. Then trouble came. My wife had been instructed by her co-conferees to canvass the flat house in which we lived. In fact, one of the great ladies had put up her eyeglass, and intending to be pleasant had said: "How nice, Mrs. Wendell (our name is Mendwell), that you live in a flat. You'll get all the people in it, won't you? I hope it's what the newspapers call a 'double-decker.'" When my wife asked me innocently what a 'double-decker' was, I told her that it must be a sort of two-story house boat. I didn't dare let her know that her new acquaintance had purposely or otherwise confounded our \$100-a-month apartments with a two-room suite in the slums. So this pain was spared her on account of her propaganda, but she had others.

On account of it the wife of the theatrical manager who lived on the top floor was seen by her husband's detectives to greet my wife effusively at an elevated railroad station on the day before the theatrical manager's wife eloped with her husband's leading man. The head of the detective agency whom I had once employed in a will case was greatly embarrassed when he came to tell me the story, and was equally surprised when I broke out laughing upon hearing it.

Socially it seemed that my wife was working down instead of up through her attendance upon the conferences. It looked as if we were becoming the connecting link between Canary's and the criminal and vicious classes of the metropolis. And yet my wife would never admit that she had had any social ambitions in taking part in the male-striking-out crusade. In fact, she seemed to find delight in tracing genealogical parallels between her own family and those of the patronesses of the movement. "Why, that woman's father," she said, alluding to the great lady who had intimated that we were of the "congested" class, "used to keep a little wine store down in Beekman Street and used to put on his coat with apologies when my grandfather came up every spring to restock his cellar. I wrote to Aunt Lucy in Petersburg and she told me all about it."

Still it was rather touching, in fact it angered me, when my wife's glass roamed the boxes from our two modest stalls at the Opera House and never drew a nod of recognition from people she met once a week. Of course, she never sought such a nod, but she could not help looking. And on Sundays I was always uncomfortable, for, as she had never done before, she read the "What Society is Doing" columns of the newspapers. I knew what the introductory portions of those columns, the part wherein are chronicled the movements of the really fashionable people, were to

her—simply a calendar of festivities to which she was not invited, though as far as birth and breeding and personal contact went she was quite entitled to be. Yet no catastrophe ensued. My wife undoubtedly had a painful experience which drew severely on her stock of Christian charity and warped her view of the whole social system north of Mason and Dixon's line. This attitude I see now must have had much to do with what came after, for nearly all the women whom she met at Canary's, and for whose passing fancy she became classed with the submerged tenth and suspected by detective agencies, were Oligarchs in politics. Her family had been Polycrats ever since there were Polycrats. Still she never showed her wounds even to me, and if the great ladies ever suspected what I felt sure was the fact, they were much cleverer women than I gave them the credit of being.

Time passed and with it the incident. The petitions were all signed and sent to the Constitutional Convention. That august body laid before the people of the State the proposition to strike out the word "male." The people struck it out. My wife by this time, it seemed to me, had lost all interest in the question. Almost the only reminder of her brief and bitter experience with the Canary set was her continuance of her correspondence with her relatives in Petersburg. This had been dropped for some years before

she wrote to her aunt in the matter of the mannerless lady's pedigree, and, although we had erected a "buffer state" of silence between our respective political principles, she had seemed to become if not a Northerner, at least that political nondescript, a New Yorker.

So little did she care in fact about the rights which she had helped to gain for her sex through her missionary work in our flat house that she did not care to exercise her full privileges. It was some three months before the last election that I said to her: "Well, I suppose you are going to take full advantage of your rights? We will go and be enrolled together and when the primaries come off I'll use my influence with Berkenhausen [the 'district leader'] to make you a member of the County Committee."

My wife laughed gayly and said that I was a dear, generous old man, but that she wouldn't put me to the expense of a conference with Berkenhausen. "You know, my dear," she said, "that we wore our last winter's clothes and the children had to stay at home from dancing school the last time you conferred with him." That was when I ran for City Judge, thinking it my duty to the party, and besides I must confess having an eye (as a reward for my self-sacrifice) on a certain federal office which I could administer without neglecting my own business. It was an expensive experiment.

Seriously, however, I am a party man on principle and as active a one as I can be. My great-grandfather was not a member of any cabinet as my wife's was. He was a Justice of the Peace, I believe, but he was a stout professor of the principles which prevailed in this republic before Mr. Jefferson with his French nostrum poisoned the stream of our political life almost at its fountain-head. My father was a Presbyterian country parson with a tendency toward "raising troops," which, I think, caused the cessation of hostilities to occasion him a severe pang. His sermons certainly lost most of their fire after the advocacy of the Union cause no longer gave him texts for them. Here in the city for the most of my adult years I have maintained the same tenets in the face of an overwhelming majority and in the presence of heart-sickening treacheries. I have seen avenue after avenue of professional advancement closed to me, and I have seen in my time men pass me in the race for the great moneyed prizes of my calling simply through treason to the political beliefs which they drank in with their mother's milk. Every lawyer knows what I mean, knows the men who while following the outward forms of their political belief are drawn, some by fat retainers, some by the meagre pickings of small reference fees, to cry peace when there is no peace, to stand dumb watching the sack of a city by their hereditary foes. If I had thought ten years ago

that any child of mine—but that is mere railing. We must adapt ourselves.

I was, I believe, at the point of my story where I went and signed my name on the party rolls and made my usual annual contribution to Berkenhausen, and my wife stayed at home and “took no interest.”

What a charming scene it was that first morning when the two sexes, at last equal in rights, went to the polls together, as for all ages they had been going to all other places—to the church and the theatre, to the funeral and the feast. There were any number of hymns and anthems about it in the papers and the magazines. It was inspiring. It was well along toward noon when my wife and I started for the polls, as I had been up late on political business the night before. The new voter whom I was about to initiate into the sacred mysteries of the Australian ballot was pale, silent, and affectionate. As she tripped to the polling place she occasionally pressed my arm, as I thought to reassure herself of its protection. It touched me. It was like a child reaching out through the railings of its crib to satisfy itself of its mother's presence. And in this new man's world she was a very child. There was a solemnity about this going to exercise the right of suffrage such as I had never known before. “Don't be nervous,” I said. “You only have to mark your ballot as I have been showing you. You can do it just as

well in the booth as you have in your parlor. Or I can have some one show you. It's against the law, but——"

"Oh, no!" she said, somewhat eagerly. "I'm not such a goose as that; I remember how to mark it."

Our street, despite what the great lady at Canary's may have thought of it, is a very respectable one, but we had to pass through another in which some of the flats were very queer. Every one knows how that is in a great city. Good and bad are side by side. As we passed one of these places I saw quite a little crowd of men and women coming out and going in our direction toward the polls. There was no sign of disorder among them except a giggle now and then, and one of the men, none of whom were as well dressed as the women, seemed to make it his business to repress that. I kept an eye on them. I understood the situation in a moment, and was in a quandary. I knew that only half of those people—the women—had a right to vote in our district. My first thought was to challenge them, as I have hundreds of Dahomey Hall repeaters and colonizers, but what could I do? My wife was on my arm. To engage in a brawl with these creatures—to open the sluiceways of the flood of billingsgate which the heeler in charge of the party was striving his best to dam—was unthinkable. So I did nothing. We reached the polls.

My heart swelled with a sort of amused pride as my wife clutched her ballot womanfully—it was the new “blanket” kind, and would have papered our kitchen wall—and, grasping gingerly the smirched casing of the swinging canvas door, entered the booth with a pale face and compressed lips. I breathed more freely as upon the call of her name, preliminary to this, her vote passed unchallenged. As I said before, we were rather late in getting to the polls. I feared that the Dahomey Hall people had voted in her name one of the residents of the Queer Street through which we had passed. Now, the loss of her vote wouldn't have been all. In the controversy following the challenge the question of personal description would have come up. Then, when my wife realized the appearance of the Dahomey Hall she-repeater who had passed herself off for her, Sophia Steptoe Mendwell, the great-granddaughter of a member of Madison's Cabinet, there would have been trouble, I fear, serious trouble. My wife's breeding, of course, makes her a woman of self-restraint, but there are circumstances under which no woman can restrain herself. This would have been one of them. A man's anger in such a case would be due to the loss of his vote—a woman's to the fact that she had been personated by a woman whom she classified as “bad.”

She came out at last with a flaming face and said “Come away” in a hurried whisper, as she

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grasped my arm. I thought I knew the cause. The partitions between the booths are thin. One of the inhabitants of Queer Street had been voting in the one adjoining that occupied by my wife. I thought I heard her toss an airy morsel of Queer Street badinage to her unseen neighbor. "That's what we'll have to put up with," I said, consolingly, as we left the barber-shop that contained the polls.

"Put up with what?" she echoed, with a little start.

"With that woman's language in the next booth," I answered, somewhat irritatedly. "I tell you, Sophia, that you may not mind such things, but our daughter don't go to vote before she's married."

"You are quite right," she said. "This is no place for girls." And then she looked relieved.

We lingered for a while about the polls. I wanted to see them under the changed new conditions. Many pretty things had been said and written about the "elevation" of the voting places. The tone of this place was raised as to the men who, through that national chivalry that permeates all ranks above that of the tramp, were more careful of their language and demeanor than I had ever before known them. The misbehavers were in almost every instance women. If they were of a certain class, they committed themselves to a frank freedom of speech in which no man would

dare to indulge outside of the abodes where such tastes are bred. But the most trouble was with another class. Never since queues were invented has the machinery of civilization been able to induce womankind to take its place in the line in front of a ticket window, a ferry gate, or a cloak-room. Consequently, the effort of the police to keep the women "workers" of both parties on the outside of an imaginary statutory line 150 feet from the polls were truly pitiable. I fell into talk with one of these disturbers of the people's peace immediately after she had been threatened with arrest for pursuing a shop-girl up to the very door of the booth. "That Dahomey Hall creature is doing it right along," she said angrily, appealing to me. "Why shouldn't I?"

I recognized her then as a woman I knew, having met her in one of the semi-moral, semi-political "movements" whose wrecks strew the pathway of our municipal history. She was one of the old forlorn hope of woman-suffragists, whose adherence to the cause dated far back of the Canary propaganda. My wife shuddered as she looked at her. She had copied the style of the men "workers" as far as she could. Her hair had always been short, but that was a small part of her make-up. She wore a mackintosh, and stuffed one bare hand in a side pocket. The other was free, and between its fingers were inserted sheaves of "pasters." She leaned against a firebox as she talked,

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shifting from one foot to the other as she felt fatigue. "Well, how's it going?" I asked—the familiar election-day question. The apostle of emancipation cocked up one eye in a fair imitation of Shorty McFadden, the Dahomey captain of the district, and answered: "They've run in all the policemen's wives on us, and their sisters and their cousins and their aunts, and all the Street Cleaning Department's women, and all the street-car women, but I think we've got 'em in the elevated railroad employees. We sent a delegation to young Freddie Mould, the president, day before yesterday, and told him that if he didn't throw the whole vote our way, every vote we had would be cast for underground transit. You know we're voting on that, too, on the referendum. He promised, and I think he's playing straight, but we're keeping mighty close tab on him."

"How about the Canary vote?" I asked. "I haven't seen much of it out here."

She laughed and imitated a bird chirp. "Oh, the Canaries and their gilded cage. Well, they've forgotten all about us and we about them. Perhaps there's a few of 'em out down in the brown-stone region—the 'diamond back' district, you know. But that whole thing was a little strategy we played on the 'ladies.' We knew they had no voting strength. But we needed their influence with the Constitutional Convention, don't you see? There were less than two hundred men in a coop.

The leaders of the city delegation were in the Canary crowd, and there wasn't one of the others that couldn't be bribed by an invitation to dinner at the Canary tables. He-he! Well, I don't suppose I ought to speak ill of the bridge that carried us over. We've parted company. I heard from one of our 'diamond back' workers that Mrs. Lowe Joak was still at Lenox—this has been such a warm fall—and Mrs. Thrussle Wise had turned her activity back into its old channel of supplying hair-brushes to the remnant of the Blackfeet tribe of Indians."

I asked one more question. "Is there much of this Queer-Street vote?" The woman's face grew serious. "There's not so much up here," she said, pointing to the bare trees of the west side of the Park, on which our polling place fronted, "but down in the Tenderloin and the lower East Side—about Eldridge and Rivington streets—I understand that Dahomey Hall has dug up some types such as I never knew existed, and I'm an old 'slummer,' you know. But, mercy me. They're getting away from me. Now here," she said to "the Dahomey Hall creature," "don't you cross that line again."

The amazon had been fortifying herself while we were talking. "You go ——." I am glad to say that the adjuration which she used is one that I had not heard since some years before I was married. Men don't use it for fear of being

thrashed or shot. The suffragist stuffed her "pasters" in her ears. My wife and I turned and fled incontinently.

I left my wife at home and went down-town. I stopped at the headquarters of the state committee. Things looked blue. No wonder. The farmers' wives and daughters—the salvation of the country in the past, when they were content to rock the cradle and rule the world by bearing and breeding the men of light and learning—were not "coming out," the wires said.

How could they? I thought of my own youth and the multifarious cares of a woman's life in the country—the baking and churning and washing and bed-making, the "woman's work that is never done." I wondered at the fatuous ignorance of my party leaders, who had believed the story of the suffragists that the whole domestic economy of the interior of the State could stop for a day while the women drove each their two to five miles to a polling-place. I laid down the sheaf of telegrams with a sigh.

I went on to the lower East Side to see the "types" of which my friend the woman "worker" had spoken. Heavens! What had Dahomey Hall not "dug up"? Not only those gas-pallid, paint-bedecked creatures, whose faces had been seen before at nights by the dim, sickly shine of the street lamps, but all those who had fallen from the ranks of the pavement traipsing army, and had been

waiting in nooks and corners of the tenement houses for the Charities Department hearse to bear them to the Potter's Field, hiding meantime from the echo of the ambulance gong that would signal their departure to the abhorred hospital. What grotesque fantasies disease had written upon their deformed, their toothless, sightless often, faces. What stains of snuff; what a reek of opium—enough. It was as horrible, but more human, to see a poor Italian woman, who at the command of the padrone, with whom the district leader dealt, had been borne from childbed to cast her vote for Dahomey Hall.

When I reached a Bayard-Street polling-place I found an interesting and not repulsive sight. A band of Croatian women had been brought up to vote. I knew the class, having observed them once in the Pennsylvania coke region, whither the searching of a mine title for a Wall Street syndicate had taken me. Swart and stocky like their husbands, they are fiercer in fight. I have known a hamlet full of them drive their recreant lords and masters back against the Winchester muzzles of the deputy sheriffs—aye, not altogether drive, but lead them back. They are called stupid. Perhaps they are on every point but one. That is the main chance. They were, of course, all stout partisans of Dahomey Hall. Their husbands were employed either in the various departments of the city's public works or by the Dahomey Hall

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contractors. Soon after I reached the polls a carriage was driven up the street. In it sat a white-haired woman, whose face I knew. To her this day was God-given. A deeply religious woman, she verily believed that the Almighty had prolonged her life to its unusual span so that she might cast her vote and see all her sex cast their votes, and so depart in peace. So she was driving from poll to poll, drinking in the sights and sounds of her emancipation day with a deep delight. She bowed and smiled to the swarthy women on the pavement. They responded with stolid looks, somewhat distrustful, as the looks of all the lower and more recent class of immigrants are to our "better class." Then they began chattering inquiringly among themselves in their own tongue. They sought to know something more of the beaming, white-haired old lady in black silk and gold spectacles. Then apparently they were enlightened. The ward alderman happened by, and recognizing the world-known face of the benevolent-looking woman, carelessly imparted her name to the Croatian man who led the band, and said smilingly: "Look out for her, Joe. She's a rank old Oligarch; one of the old Abolitionist crowd."

The chattering and the muttering increased. It grew angry. The dull eyes of the women flashed. The bare arms under their rolled-up sleeves began to writhe in wild gesticulation. The old lady

looked interested. She leaned forward from her carriage and said: "Isn't there one of you men who can interpret what I say? I want to talk to them." The excitement of the women grew. They had learned the political faith of the old lady. To them the success of her party meant that their breadwinners would be thrown "out of their jobs on the pipes" or "on a broom."

"No; no," shrieked the Croatian politician back to the old lady.

"No speak—no speak," and to the hackman: "Go; go."

The fighting blood of the old suffragist was aroused. She stood up in her carriage. "But I will speak," she said proudly. "You, sir," to the hackman, "stand still," and then again to the unhappy Croat who was trying to control the sidewalk sisterhood: "The time has passed, man, when you can stand between us and our sisters. Women of Bayard Street——" She never finished. A rotten vegetable knocked her spectacles from her eyes. A dozen women sprang like so many furies at the horses' heads before I could yell "Go on—drive on," at the driver, who was powerless from fear. The forward surge of the following mob of women cast me up against the carriage side. I turned and thrust out at the women with my cane. Then down I went in the gutter, while they swarmed at the carriage and sought to drag "their sister" from her seat. As I

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came up again, gasping and muddy, I heard the regular tramp of disciplined feet behind me. Then high above me loomed the form of a big police sergeant. His throat worked under his uniform collar as I heard his charging cry: "Mother of God, boys, it's hard, but we've got to do it. Give 'em the stick." Then came the sickening whack, whack of the billies on skull and back and shoulder blade—that clockworking, magnificent motion of New York policemen driving a mob. Then there were wild screams, shrieked oaths veiled fortunately in a foreign tongue.

"Do you know the old lady, sir?" asked the sergeant, sheathing his club as he came back from his business-like little charge. "Then for heaven's sake get her home. This is no place for the likes of her. Larry," to a roundsman standing by, "ring for an ambulance. Some of these," pointing at three stunned devils prostrate in the street, "will need mending. Did I ever think to live to see the day when I'd be clubbing a woman?"

I thanked him and drove off. I resuscitated the evangelist of woman suffrage at a drug-store in Houston Street, for she had fainted. "Ah, what an ending," she cried, weeping, "to fifty years of work! Oh, my misguided sisters! Oh, the cause!"

"Madam," I said, with all the dignity that a battered hat and a torn shirt-collar would permit,

"if that squad hadn't been turned out just when it was to relieve the policemen on duty at the polls your 'cause' would have been quenched in your own blood."

"Never, sir, never," she answered angrily, "the blood of martyrs——"

I lost my temper and my manners. "Martyrs!" I said. "Meddlers, madam, meddlers!" Our drive ended in silence.

The polls had closed when I got to my own headquarters at the Federalist Club. I was more than ashamed to go there in the state I was, but I was very anxious for news. I burst into laughter as I entered the restaurant. Half the men there were in the same or a worse plight than I. Some had met their battles and their bruises as I had in trying to avert rows growing out of class or party hatreds, but most had suffered in trying to repress disturbances arisen between the women known as "good" and the women styled as "bad," the two most bitterly, hopelessly irreconcilable classes in the world's history, beside whose war for life, whose irrepressible and in the nature of things unendable conflict the feud of Capulet and Montague, of Guelph and Ghibelline, of Celt and Saxon, Latin and Teuton, Jew and Gentile, are as nursery broils.

"Gad, you ought to have seen 'em," said one of our younger members, who was "shy," as he would have expressed it, of a cravat. "Half a block off

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the avenue, next door to the Union Club, scrap-pin'—well, you ought to have seen the gay lady that landed on the nose of Mrs. ——”

“Hssh-sh-sh,” we all said warningly.

“Well, I know,” said the young fellow. “Ladies names don't go, but, gad, ain't we emancipated. Say, Mr. Joak, Mr. Lowe Joak, ain't we got to adapt ourselves?”

Mr. Lowe Joak, who had preached the doctrine of woman suffrage in the Federalist Club and converted it thereto, disappeared.

“One for his nobs,” said the young member.

“But, oh, I say, you fellows, we all ought to go 'round to Dahomey Hall and congratulate Bloker. My, but it was pretty politics. He wasn't sendin' out any petitions. He wasn't havin' any speeches made or any hymns sung or odes oded. Your Uncle Blo' was just sawin' wood and sayin' nothin'. He was organizin'. He was just passin' the word to his scrub women and his sweep women and his sewin' women and his——”

“S'sh-s'sh,” we all said again.

“Well, I haven't said anything, have I?” said the innocent young member.

“Let's go around and learn politics. Bet you \$10 to \$5 he's twice as much majority as he had in '92, say 150,000 in round numbers.”

“Impossible,” cried another man.

“It will be nearer a quarter of a million,” I said savagely. “It was 75,000 in '92. They are

casting three votes to one of what they did. Our young friend has learned the trick. We are not casting one and one-tenth to one of what we did."

But there was panic in Dahomey Hall when we reached there, as two or three of us did. As we pushed our way across Irving Place through the dense mob along Fourteenth Street we saw a carriage at the curb as near the hall as it could get. A man, whose pallid cheeks were in ghastly contrast to the black, somewhat grizzled, beard which clothed his heavy jowls and bulldog chin, had just entered it. I never saw fear on Bloker's face before in twenty years nor dreamed that it could live there. But he cowered in his brougham as the policemen slashed and shouted: "Way for Mr. Bloker. Damn you, way for Mr. Bloker." The great boss who had "organized" the victory was fleeing from its fruits.

We saw the reason as we pressed onward. It was 1789 come again—the fishwomen, Versailles, a hundred Carmagnoles in full sweep. These women had been promised "emancipation" for their votes, and they were taking it. The corner beer saloon had not been sacked, but bought up by their adherents and admirers. The stock stood in the street for all who came to help themselves.

"By —, it's the girls' chance to-night," roared a man whom I had known before as a decent Polycrat to a protesting adviser. "They've won this day for Dahomey Hall what can't be

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taken away for one hundred years. Give 'em their fling. Wh-o-o-p!"

They took it. They danced about a dozen bonfires in the broad street. They ran and reeled up and down the spacious stairways of the Hall. They were holding a mock convention in the assembly room where judges, district attorneys, adjutant-generals bow the knee to Bloker. They had a band that played waltz tunes, instead of the old stock election-night "patriotic airs." There was a womanish streak through it all. The women of the uptown West Side places, our Queer Street, for instance, kept aloof from the Bowery Jezebels and pretended to look on.

"Come," I said at last to our young member. "This is enough of emancipation. Let us go."

Late that night and weary, I climbed the stairs to our flat. I had been so bathed in degradation throughout the day, and I bore such evident marks of it on my person through the Bayard-Street incident, that I loathed myself for entering its decent precincts. "Thank God!" I thought, as I turned my key in the lock, "my wife has seen nothing—taken no part in this debauch of the ballot."

"Well, little woman," I said, as I entered, "I haven't been on a spree, though I suppose I look so; I've been rescuing old Mrs. Ranton, and New York's gone for Dahomey Hall by about 250,000 majority, as far as we can learn."

I began a would-be humorous recital of the day's

adventures, to which my wife, in her wrapper, listened with an ever increasing abstraction and biting of her finger-nails. She had not kept the cook up, and her nervousness increased until she burned the rarebit, which she generally prepared for me with perfect dexterity. Then she began walking the floor, as I sat back smoking and drinking my bottle of ale. Her mood in time, of course, passed to me. I felt that the air was charged with something explosive. I could not dream what it was till all at once she fell upon her own knees and clasped mine with her hands.

"Oliver," she said, in a low, scared tone, "I fear that I have wronged you."

Now, I submit that in all the years that man and wife have talked English to each other that phrase has but one meaning. I am not a low-minded man, but I took that meaning. I gasped. I felt my cheeks puff with the rush of blood, my eyes bulge, the cords of my neck swell. My heart turned over—flopped, like a captive turtle in a pail, and then stopped beating. "Sophy," I said at last, in a voice that I did not recognize, as I weakly fondled her hair. "Sophy, poor child, you have lost your mind. You're crazy, Sophy dear. Poor Sophy."

She raised her swimming eyes a moment, caught my look and read it. "Oh, no, no, no!" she screamed hysterically. "Dear Oliver, not that; I didn't mean that, dear boy—dear boy," with a

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wild little laugh. "You must be crazy. I only mean that I—that I—voted for Dahomey Hall."

"You voted for Dahomey Hall?" I echoed stupidly, "you voted—you voted——"

"Yes; yes; but don't go on in that parrot fashion. I'll take it back. I'll swear it off. Can't I swear it off? You know you can swear taxes off, Oliver. Can't you swear off your vote?"

"No," I said heavily. "Never; not in time nor eternity."

"Well, listen, listen Oliver, listen. I didn't think you'd feel so. I didn't really, Oliver. And all my family were Polycrats, and my great-grandfather was in Madison's cabinet. And my f-f-father w-w-went out with his State. And I hated those Oligarch women at Canary's. And I wrote to my Aunt Betsy at Petersburg, and she said that Dahomey Hall wasn't so bad—for Northerners, Oliver, and her brother—my father—had known Mr. Fernando Wood—was that his name, Oliver? And he was a g-good man and a f-friend of the South, and wanted New York City to secede, too, when it did. Oh, Oliver, don't look so. Don't look so!" She fell at my feet.

I had recovered my wits, but not my equanimity. The raging demon of partisanship was in my veins. "Well, madam," I said, in a tone which I had never used before inside of a private house, "all I have to say is that if you voted for Dahomey Hall to-day you were in devilish fine company."

She rose and moved along the hall toward the door of our room with a majesty which I admired. She gave me one look as she stood on its threshold—the look of a woman who has humiliated herself—and in vain. She entered. The key turned in the lock.

Perhaps we may live it down; I hope so. Perish politics! What is it all to a hair of her sweet head? I say I hope we will live it down. I hope so, I hope so.

The Murder in Our Flat



HE pity of it had weighed
upon my wife's spirits
during the evening after

The Tale of a
Nest Behind
the Arras

she told me of the occurrence at and before dinner time, but it was in the dark that she began to sob, and said with a snuffle, "Oh, suppose—suppose."

"Suppose, indeed, my dear," I said, for I followed her thought easily, and, I confess, it appealed to me; "but if you choose to call the flat a nest, I have not stolen the furniture for it, and, moreover, animals of a lower organization than the human kind have not the same capacity for suffering and——"

"Oh, hush," said my wife. "Suppose some one would talk that way about us, and—and it might happen to us not in that way. I know, of course, I'm not a fool, my dear."

This last was in answer to a frivolous attempt on my part to point out the absurdity of the parallel which her mind was so determinedly following.

Then she was silent, but in the dark I seemed, being sympathetically affected, to be conscious of

a sense of desolation which we had wrought, and I would have welcomed the presence of a succession of furtive little noises in the night which only a week before I had called a great nuisance.

In the morning I saw that the three mutilated velvet balls had been cut from the bottom of the portiere. My wife gave me one to match at the upholsterer's. "I shall keep the other two," she said, "to remind me never to be cruel to anything, for oh, it m-m-might happen to us. You kn-kn-know it might, though not in that way, of course."

So I left her, and on my way down-town stopped at the doctor's to ask him whether he thought it would be advisable for us to take another flat to efface the impression which might have so distinct a bearing on future events. When I told him what the impression was he laughed hilariously, and said that I would have to hire a row of apartment houses if little things like that were to drive us out of our quarters. Then he fell to talking of how the diffusion of smattering knowledge among the laity really brought more harm than the deepest ignorance.

Nevertheless, I can fully appreciate my wife's feeling, and would like to hear again the furtive little noises in the night.

The thing came about through those mutilated velvet balls at the bottom of the portiere attached to the fringe. We wondered, at first, being young

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housekeepers, what caused it, and failed to associate it with the furtive little noises, the squeaking and the pattering, which we heard in the night and the source of which, of course, we knew.

Many a morning after breakfast had my wife plumped down on her knees in the ribboned morning-gown, and, making a very pretty picture with her dark head in the red damask of the portiere, had examined the mutilated little velvet balls with all the gravity of the first detective on the scene of a murder.

Finally a light broke in upon her on one of these inspections. She stood up as one convinced, pushed the fluffy hair back that had escaped from her pompadour, for I would not let her wear a bang, and said: "It's mice. You must get a trap."

Often have we thought since of the sorrow we would have averted by simply tucking up the portiere. But this did not occur to us at the time, and I got the trap. It was one of those round, wooden affairs whose mechanism now appears to us a refinement of cruelty, since it grasps the mouse by the throat instead of caging him as a rat trap does. We baited it first with Gorgonzola cheese, though my wife doubted the efficacy of this, for she said they were American mice. I told her that she need not worry about that as very little foreign cheese was made out of the country. Nevertheless, the Gorgonzola did not

stop the furtive little noises nor the nibbling at the velvet balls, and so I acknowledged the superior wisdom of my wife and bought a pound of the yellow cheese which is kept behind circular wire nettings in grocery stores and cut in slabs by men in their shirt sleeves.

That night the furtive noises stopped suddenly, and were instantly succeeded by the clicking sound of the mechanism in operation. We recognized it, as we had snapped the trap frequently in baiting it. In fact it had pinched my wife's fingers, which are long and very white. That noise now in my wife's memory sounds, I am sure, at least as loud as the falling of a gallows trap, and the sound is as sinister. Then it simply announced the end of annoyance. I lighted the gas and picked up the trap. It seems to me strange that I saw nothing pathetic at the time in the waggle of the little tail which stuck *in articulo* out of one of those cruel holes. I was not purposely cruel. I had got up in fact to put one little marauder out of any agony he might be in by reason of the faulty operation of the throttling device. If he was alive I drowned him in the kitchen sink. I went back to bed and was soon asleep, as was my wife, not having at the time any of the feelings of Lady Macbeth by reason of having suggested the grocery cheese.

There was no further mutilation of the portiere and no further noises were heard. We did hear

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some squeaking behind the moulding of the wall and set the trap again. But these sounds grew fainter and seemed to die in the distance on the second night, as if the companions of our one victim were moving away from us. We little realized the significance of this diminution of sound at the time. Since then my wife, thinking of it, has burst out crying and looked at me with eyes of harrowing remorse.

On the third morning after the cessation of the annoyance my wife told me to have the janitor send a plumber to our flat. She was sure the water pipes were leaking just behind the wall of our room. I did as she said.

That evening as I came home to dinner my wife opened the door for me. She had evidently been waiting for the sound of the elevator stopping at our floor. She closed the door after me as one does when there is sorrow in the house. Her head was bowed and she pressed a finger to her lip as if to keep it from quivering. She stepped softly, and her eyes were red.

"My dear," I said in real alarm, "what is the matter?"

We had walked along our narrow flat house' hall to the parlor, and thence I had gone into our room between the folds of the portiere which had been mutilated. She followed, and, grasping the portiere, looked at me with the Cupid's bow of her mouth all twisted out of its shapeliness by grief,

as if Cupid had wrenched it in a pet and left it out in a night's rain. Then she burst out:

"I cried before the plumber. We found the nest. It was lined with bits of the velvet. And oh—oh!"

"Are you crying about the velvet, my dear?" I asked, somewhat puzzled.

"No, oh n-o-o-o; listen to me. The plumber came and tore out moulding, and he didn't find the leak, but we found the nest and the velvet, and, oh, oh, oh, those little squeaks we heard—she was there in the dark crying for him, and we had killed him and he couldn't come to her, and she starved to d-d-death."

My face, I suppose, expressed my puzzlement, as the incident of three nights before was not graven on my memory. Then something like a pout at my stupidity puckered the Cupid's bow of my wife's mouth into a small, fresh Jacqueminot bud at Easter, and the tear-stained cheek flushed from wet ivory to a warm velvet. "Oh, can't you see?" she cried. "The m-m-mouse was m-m-married and they would have had ch-ch-children."

"My poor child," I said, and took her in my arms, where she sobbed again. "And she was crying in the dark for her h-h-husband, her mate, I mean."


My wife wept again at dinner as she spoke of the housewifely qualities of the deceased and how neatly she kept her flat—she meant her nest—and

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she smiled through her tears at the recollection of the plumber's surprise at her emotion, and how the plumber had imparted to the maid to impart to her the full significance of the discovery. But it was not until night and dark that a sharper thought came to her, and she cried: "Oh, suppose—suppose," and "It might happen to us."

I hope that the doctor is right in his opinion that this impression will have no evil effect on the course of future events, and I assure all the mice of Manhattan that the trap has been burned in the range, and that they can come and be welcome to make a mouse tower of our flat.

A Holiday with Camilla

“OME, my Camilla, come,
let's go a-Maying,” I
said and yawned, for
the morning sun smote

Being
a Specimen
of a Hack's
Recreation

hot through the windows of our three-story back.

“Sh-sh,” said Camilla, “I haven't counted all the words yet, and besides it isn't May. It's July.” Then Camilla adjusted that cunning little curl back of her right ear which I like to tweak, and went on. “2305—6—7—8—9—10. My dear, this is not 2,500 words.”

I would have you know that my wife is not a mere ninny-hammer, like David Copperfield's first wife—the one who ought to have lived. She, David Copperfield's first wife, only held his pens. My wife is really useful. She counts the words of the stuff I write, and says, “Oh, a cent apiece!” and sees that the robber publishers don't fleece me too much, or, in other words, that I don't give them more than they order. She is inexpressibly useful in that way, and the gravity that settles under her pompadour—I do not let her wear bangs—when she begins to count is charming.

Beneath the May, among the hay,
My love who loved me once and I.

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"Quotions, quotions," said my wife. She has a pretty way when I begin to quote verse of putting her taper forefingers into the shape of two white and pink inverted commas and saying "quotions" instead of "quotations." It seems very charming to me. To other people it may seem silly. I do not know which of us is right. I have been a long time in the world, but I have only had a wife for a very little while.

"Where shall we go?" asked Camilla.

"Fort Lee, I guess," said I.

"Shall I put on my Eton suit?" she asked.

"Of course you will," said I.

Now the Eton suit is a matter of great pride to us, and it took a great many hundred words to buy it. It is blue serge, of course, and oh how charming my wife's waist is under the jacket! But more than that, a silk striped shirt, and a light blue belt goes under it—the jacket. She put it on, and then she fixed her hair and curled that curl behind her ear—not that it needed curling—just to tantalize me.

Then we took a car, and went to the boat, and then we went cat-a-cornered up across the Hudson. How blue it is! It always gives me a lift, an exultation, the crossing of the North River, and I fell into Swinburne, looking down at old Castle Williams across the dainty feathers of the white-caps, and I said as usual—my wife knows all my quotations—

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Peace with all graves on earth,
For death, or sleep, or birth,
Be always one in worth
One with another.

But when my time shall be,
Oh, mother, oh my sea,
Dead or alive take me,
Me, too, my mother !

"Your mother is not the sea," said my wife, "but a nice old lady in Dutchess County, and if she could hear you talk about being 'among the hay' and 'beneath the May' at the same time, we would never have another chance to go there on our summer vacation. O—h, there's a horrid man looking at us !"

My wife twisted the little brown curl around her finger. Being feminine, I suppose, she could not help it. I looked at the man whom she had said was horrid. He was old. There was no leer in his blinky old eyes, but a glance of frank admiration and of despair as I thought. I pitied him. I had insane desires to take him down to the bar and buy him a drink. It was the best I could do for him, but I only said, "My dear, I don't think his looks will hurt us," and then we landed.

We went upon the bluff among the pines and Camilla became a cat. Now this is the highest praise. A well-trained house cat is the most lady-like thing in creation, just as a high-bred house dog is the most gentleman-like. The poses of one, the air and graces are as perfect as are the

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manners of the other. So when I say that Camilla became a cat I simply mean that she fell into the graceful feline ways that the life of cities restrains and prevents. She lay prone without due consideration of the number of hundreds of words that her Eton suit had cost, with its striped silk waist and its light blue belt. She watched the ants intently as they bustled like tiny stevedores at their work. They always remind me of the loading of a river steamboat that only has an hour to stay in port—do the ants.

“And to think that they don’t get a cent for it,” said Camilla thoughtfully.

Then she sat up and listened critically to the noisy robins in the tree overhead. “It isn’t a bit like the bird-song in ‘The Valkyrie,’” she remarked.

“That bird was a Bavarian,” I said profanely.

“Bah!” said Camilla. “How obvious!”

She spoke, I thought, in a very scornful manner. Wives should always accept their husband’s jokes.

Then Camilla grew very bad and wicked and reckless. Did you ever see a frolicsome Maltese that was tired of licking its paws roll over on its back? So she rolled over in her new Eton suit, this shocking Camilla, and she said, “Give me a cigarette.”

“My dear,” I said, “I have noticed several old ladies in their peignoirs watching you smoke my

cigarettes from their back windows. What sort of a reputation will we have?"

"Better than you deserve," said Camilla. "Oh, give me a cigarette!"

And so she lay and puffed while that tired old sun, so sick of lighting our devious ways here about town, sank into its sleepy rest in the Jersey woods.

A beat of paddles broke the placid blue beneath us. The Troy boat was passing up.

"Come," I said; "our half-holiday is over."

Camilla caught at my arm and went dancing down the path, still in her ridiculous Maltese way. "Oh," she said, "we will dine at an Italian table d'hôte, and, mind you, you can have but one char-treuse after dinner."

A Pug's Christmas Dream



RS. TREGASKIS

*And Its
Relation to a
Charming
Widowhood*

yawned and thrust her
hands up through her

heavy black hair, gave a little shiver, and moved her arm-chair a little closer to the fire that was dying on the brass andirons of her little drawing-room, up two flights in the Abencerrages flats. "I am growing old," she said with a half smile; "my vitality gets low as it nears midnight. Eh, Crispino?"

Crispino did not answer. His short, black, thought-corrugated nose was nicely adjusted upon his two black paws, so that the utmost possible amount of air should reach his creasy throat through his abbreviated nostrils.

"Oh, you lazy brute!" said Mrs. Tregaskis, but very softly, so as not to disturb her pet's repose. Her rather disdainful eyes softened as her glance dwelt on the little dog. As one might readily see, she was one of those women about whom a certain violent class of sociologists grow malignant in their speeches and letters to the afternoon papers. She wasted her affections upon a pug, and pugs were out of fashion, too; that was

the strange part of it, from her friends' point of view, which was not that of the sociologists. Since Crispino had been master of her household, a long succession of dog tyrants had ruled in other doggy households—dachshunds, fox, bull, and skye terriers, cocker spaniels, and hairless Mexicans. But, by the more popular standard, Mrs. Tregaskis was "one of those women who are bringing on the social revolution, who roll in the park, ladies and gentlemen [or Mr. Editor], with lap-dogs by their sides, while the children of the poor are starving."

A widow, too, of less than a year's standing, and still in heavy black; but people rather envied her that. There could not have been much love between such a cold woman as she and so formal a man's man as Charley Tregaskis, whose clubs took up two lines in the "Clubman's Directory," and they were both over thirty when they married. So his death meant, undoubtedly, a little more freedom for her—that was all; a cessation of what slight worryment he may have given her over the age of his duck or mutton, or the temperature of his Burgundy. A depraved taste for fresh meat and iced wine was certainly implanted in the breast of Eve; the best women were not free from it—such was about all of his philosophy of woman that Charley Tregaskis had ever expressed in public.

Mrs. Tregaskis, being warm once more, looked about the room with an air of content. The an-

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nual worry of getting off her Christmas presents was over. There was more satisfaction in that than in the Christmas presents that had come in, and some of which were scattered about. A mourning watch was one; it was the gift of an old flame *redivivus*, a piece of delicate sympathy and self-abnegation, or of delicate impudence, she did not know which. She smiled rather sadly, recalling certain words: "My memory will live with you, Cissy, at least for a dog's age." They were almost the parting words of her husband, the last of his rather underdone little jokes.

There came a whimper from the rug where Crispino's corrugated nose rested on his black paws. Mrs. Tregaskis' eyes lighted a moment. "Dreaming, old boy, dreaming?" she said, stroking the dog's neck with the toe of her slipper. "I wonder what you're dreaming of?"

Mrs. Tregaskis suspiciously stroked her own long white neck. There seemed a sort of contraction there. "Oh, I like to hear him dream!" she used to say when pugs were fashionable, and Crispino was a recent Christmas present, and Crispino and she had not been alone by the fire. She was not conscious of having thought of that time just now before she felt the contraction of her throat. It is often so; scents of strange flowers or of a woman's hair, or elusive minor strains of music and the like, touch a subtler memory than that of the work-a-day, fetch-and-carrying mind.

Crispino did not wake at the touch of her slipper. He was too far in dreamland for that. His whimper rose to a pathetic, apologetic bark, the "please don't" tone of a particularly short-necked pug who wants to stop a quarrel in which his babyish heart is tremendously interested on both sides.

Mrs. Tregaskis bit her lip. The contraction in her throat was almost choking her. "Doggy, doggy, are you dreaming of that?" she whispered softly, bending over the corrugated nose. "You barked like that then," she went on. "What babies we were! what big babies!" she repeated; "and who would have thought it of us?" She leaned her head back and smiled through a mist as she thought of her big, portly, formal husband coming into the room from the street and making awkward pretended passes at her with his cane, just so that they could see the frisking agony of the little dog begging the one he loved next best to spare the one he loved best of all. One of Charley Tregaskis' intimates tried it one night after dinner, when the Burgundy had been at quite the right temperature. "See me beat your mistress," he had said; and he had gone away with his thumb in an old glove, hating dogs ever after.

Mrs. Tregaskis smiled without a tear at that memory. Crispino growled in his sleep. "That's right, little man," she whispered. "Remember enemies, too." She rose and softly walked the floor. Memories thickly crowded on her. Still

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the dog's dream went on. I am aware that there are people who will deny that dogs dream. They are the same people who deny that dogs think. And yet they think that they themselves think. A strange world, my masters—and my dogs!

Crispino gurgled once in his dream. His mistress sat down on the rug, and softly stroked one of his velvet ears. Was he living his whole dog's life over again? she wondered. But she had fancies—the fashionable doctors of old time would have called them vapors—but did she wish to drive them away? “Faithful doggy, faithful doggy,” she thought, softly stroking his ear again. She saw in the fire a quiet New England bathing beach, and a devoted pug puppy that had not the slightest idea of swimming, and had never before touched water outside of a tub, bravely marching, with his head going farther under water at every step, toward the place where he had last seen his mistress standing knee-deep in the waves. “Why did you let him do it?” she had cried to her husband as she rescued the dog and brought him back to his proper custodian. “Because, my dear,” he said, his stout sides shaking with laughter, “I wanted to see if he could get to Europe by walking. We're going next month, you know.”

The dog gave a gentle little sigh of relief, and stopped his strangely expressive cries. His active pug mentality seemed to have ceased its labors, but Mrs. Tregaskis' memories kept on—all of her dead

husband's jocose, amused relations with her pet, of his whispered conversations about herself when there was a frown on her forehead, of his supplications for his pugship's interposition in his own behalf, of his pretended jealousies and offered bribes to Crispino to keep watch on his wife, and let him know whom she was flirting with now—all of which Crispino had received with the thoughtful consideration which pugs extend to all human conversation of those they love. Then he would stretch out his fat, triple-rolled neck to be pinched hard, a pug's delight above all other mundane luxuries.

What was his dream now? What meant the frantic, frisky series of joyful little barks? Mrs. Tregaskis seemed to know. Her thoughtful face flushed in the firelight. Throat and lip quivered more than ever. "Poor old Charley," she said, more softly than before, and her blushes came and went as if she had been twenty years younger, as she thought of the Christmas Eve that her husband had come home, and with solemn gravity, producing a tiny baby's stocking from his pocket, had pinned it to the mantel cover, saying in his sub-humorous way, "Egad, I don't see why our boy shouldn't hang up his stocking, too," and how Crispino had jumped and barked at the bright, silken thing, appreciating his master's jest as usual, and living up heartily to his rôle of only child.

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Mrs. Tregaskis was sobbing like a child now, nay, not like a child, but like a childless and widowed woman, who knows for the first time, perhaps, how much love there has been in her life, and how much has gone out, and how little there is left but the love of a dreaming dog. She put both her arms about the triple rolls of the brute's fat neck, and her tears rained on his brow till he waked and stretched, and then did as he always did when she was in real distress, put his paws on her shoulders, and, without whimper or whine, let his silent tears flow with hers.

"Little Crispino," she whispered, "little Christmas Crispino! oh, I shall remember longer than a dog's age, longer than that, little dog!"

And when she got up, she put the mourning watch in the bottom of a drawer.

fin de Siècle

THOUGH the poet's wife was **A New** discontented, the poet had **Standpoint** but one grief as they idled away the summer days where the lip of the sea caressed the shore. It was that he could not get from the fisher-folk the story of the storm. "You might as well ask the crabs you caught this morning to tell you the history of the Revolution," he said, as they sat on the beach together—the beach which every now and then in the spring or autumn tide gave strong evidences that beneath its place had once been the habitation of men.

"They are a hearty and a simple folk and picturesque, I may say, but they seem to have preserved no traditions of the wild work that the waves and the wind have been doing before the eyes of them and their forebears these four hundred years since English-speaking people first inhabited this coast. If there were aught to wreck one might think that they had gone back to their early ancestral customs of luring vessels on the beach with false lights, so close-mouthed are they."

The poet's wife yawned. "What did you say

this place was?" She pointed with a languid white hand out to the smiling sea.

The poet smiled. "When you spread your fingers out that way, my dear," said he, making a clutch at the slender digits in question, and carrying their rosy tips up to his beard—for the poet had not long had a wife—"this little one points to what was once a famous cape: May, they called it, though there was little about the storm-swept coast to remind them of the fairest month of the year; and that tremendous thumb points in the direction of another cape, more famous when this coast had a commerce, but less poetically named. They called it Sandy Hook."

"Oh, dear!" said the poet's wife, snuggling against his sleeve, "I am glad that they stopped teaching history before I went to school. One would have to carry so much in one's head."

"In one's head!" mocked the poet. "You talk like a nineteenth-century novel of the bric-a-brac school. Why aren't you honestly ungrammatical and say 'their head'?"

"Did they talk so in nineteenth-century novels?" mused the poet's wife. "Well, it must have been much nicer then. Do you know, I was looking over those great big musty newspaper files that you brought from that strange, vast, ruinous place where we stopped, where there was that wreck of a big stumpy bronze woman in the harbor."

"Manhattan was its earliest and prettiest name,"

said the poet. "Both the Dutch and English tried their awkward hands at rechristening it. There are strong survivals in its nomenclature. When its leading citizens, as the phrase of the day was, ceased to be an Indian tribe; why they became a band of freebooters, like the followers of the early Kidd and Morgan, as some contemporaries assert, or an organization for the purpose of directing the affairs of state, as their own writers affirm, is a fact lost in the mists of time."

"Well," said the poet's wife, "it was much more exciting—they had murders every day—oh, such nice murders! and suicides. They made me cry more than those old novels you showed me of the sentimental school, you called it—about little boys that saw golden water on the wall and little girls with crazy grandfathers. The chief man in the school had a swearing name."

"Dickens!" suggested the poet, smiling; "but we have murders and suicides now, only the cylinders in which our news is brought to us—for we would not commit such ephemeral matter as the mere news of the day to lasting type—have more significant and important tales to tell, the doings of the great world of science and art."

"They are very stupid, those cylinders," said the poet's wife passively, "and I warn you that when we go home, I shall either put that phonograph out of the house or up in your study. I cannot bear it at the breakfast table any longer."

"Very well, my dear," said the poet meekly, "but what else did you like about that time as revealed in the old files? How far have you dabbled in the black art of history, for the love of which your husband is dignified with the style and title of the Apostle of Reaction by our modern sages who would compel us to look only forward?"

"Oh, it was so much more joyous!" said the poet's wife, clasping her hands on her knee; "there were letters from these buried places, and in these letters the people all danced and feasted and wore gorgeous clothing, and changed it many times a day. And those who were, I suppose, the great men of the time, exchanged quips and jokes when they met. They gave such frank praise to the most beautiful women of each place, and sometimes their pictures are given; though they did not seem to be at all lovely in these pictures, and I wondered a great deal that they should say they were in the letters. There seems to have been no backbiting and no heartburnings. Everybody seemed to try to see how much enjoyment he could give and how much he could get. The music was always playing. The sand and the surf were always sparkling. It was not a bit like this stupid place, and much gayer than our own coast where all the world but you and I go."

"They have music and sparkling sands and surf there, have they not?" asked the poet.

"Yes; but you know what I mean. That joy

of living is gone. You bathe, and you think all the time that you are looking like a fright, and you sleep in a hot room in the afternoon and wake up with a headache, and you are useful perforce to a lot of people who you are afraid will try to presume on your seaside acquaintance when you get back to town."

"All the gold was red, and all the ladies were gay," said the poet, laughing. "So wrote one of their own greatest men—the same who prophesied the New Zealander in the ruins of St. Paul's, little thinking that he meant the Cossack. He spoke of the ballad writers of every antiquity, and he said, too, with rare prescience, that the world would look back with regret to the golden age of Victoria, when the poor did not envy the rich nor the rich grind the faces of the poor. I fancy, dear, that *fin-de-siècle* affairs, of which they talked so much as if it were the culmination of all things, was not so halcyonic as their letters made it out to be. Yet it certainly seems so."

"But it was also much simpler. They could be democratic then without fear of any one taking advantage of it, don't you know," said the poet's wife, not pushed for a fresh argument, but going rhapsodically on, propelled by her store of impressions gathered from the old files. "Why, I saw the picture of a man with a beard, in a bathing suit, ducking a little boy in the ocean, and I read the text; and it was the President and his grand-

son, and there was a crowd of people watching them on the beach. The President told the letter-writer when he came out that the water was cold; and that was the same President you told me about whose grandfather was another President, and whose great-grandfather was a Governor and a 'Signer,' and one of whose ancestors—oh! way, way back—had killed an old English king."

The poet's face darkened. "After they had sacrificed two Presidents, and their successors another, to their crazy notions of democracy," he said, "they stopped all that. Yet, I doubt if, for all their democracy, the President conversed in his bathing-suit with a seashore letter-writer. There was in use at the time an illustrious multi-meaning term called 'fake,' whose precise etymology and application I have hunted through many authorities while working on this epic. If you will give me the date of that picture and letter, I will look in the columns of rival journals for a few days thereafter to see if it is not thus demonstrated."

The poet's wife began to cry softly. "I d-d-don't think you are a p-p-poet at all," she said, with a whimper. "Y-y-you destroyed all my illusions. What will you do for poetry yourself?"

The poet kissed his wife. "There was true poetry enough in the time," he said, "if I can only dig it out.—Listen, here comes the over-sea express."

"Only one aerolite a day!" said his wife scornfully. "What a hole!"

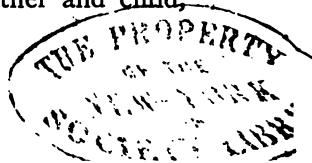
Out of the broad red pathway of the setting sun upon the water came what had seemed at first the laborious flapping of a seagull's wing; then like the mysterious swift passage of a wind-spurred ship over a windless sea came a tremendous rushing and beating overhead as of a thousand eagles' wings. Then it ceased.

"They are putting out the parachute to know if there are any passengers for the West. Oh, come, let us go from this lonesome place!" said the poet's wife.

"One more day, dear," said the poet gently, as the gold-buttoned functionary alighted at the little station from the parachute of the Two Capitals—St. Petersburg and St. Louis—Limited Aerolite. "I have heard of one very old fisherman who lives down the beach, and whose great-grandfather told him the story of the 'Storm.'"

And as his wife tripped with a pretty pout toward the fisherman's house where they were staying, and the great aerial train rushed westward, the poet gazed sadly out at the sea.

"I fear that I can never grasp it," he said, "and yet, what a time! What a volcano they danced upon! Unwarned by the great storm of '89, they danced and drank and flirted and feasted here until the greater earthquake-born tempest of 1910 swept upon them all, man and maid, mother and child,



millionaire and scullion, in their jewels and silks, among their fragile, gayly painted kiosks and caravansaries, and silenced all the songs and laughter and love-whisperings of one hundred thousand merry-makers in sandy, clammy death. Nor in their graver affairs had they much longer foresight. Their sympathies were with barbaric Russia in her struggle with Western Europe. They could not see that the eruption of her hordes consequent upon the perfidious surreptitious breach of the Treaty of Disarmament would turn the lands with which they had had commerce into primitive fields and forests incapable of trading with other nations. They could not see that the downfall of the British Empire, which they thought to their benefit, was merely its transference to its Oriental seat, where its trade, revived, went to America's Western coast and carried wealth, arts, letters, and science with it. They could not see what was to come. How can I see what was?"

So the poet turned back to the fisherman's house. And in the night he heard his wife moaning in her sleep for the sands and the surf that had ceased to sparkle, and the music that had ceased to play, and the joy that had ceased to be in the Arcadian *fin de siècle* XIXème.

My Niece Cécely



GO to a light opera sometimes to sit among the ghosts. They are the ghosts of those that sang and those that heard, and of what was sung and what was heard when I did not go to sit among the ghosts. The greatest ghost of all is good *Sieur Offenbach's*, whose gay spirit ruled the boards in my old times of mirth. That is a long time ago.

*The
Disadvantages
of Academic
Dissertation on
Courage*

But that is beside the question. I stopped at the foot of the Inanity steps last night, for I saw the face of a man I knew coming to me through the crowd on the sidewalk. It was Robert Martin. His elbows were stuck out somewhat. He wore a short English topcoat and he plunged along at that knock-kneed lope which is now thought generally necessary to the social salvation of young men. He plunged past me with half a nod, and I was about to enter the theatre when he stopped suddenly, turned and came back, and touched me on the shoulder. "Oh, I say, old man," said he, "is that true that your niece—that Miss Draper, I mean—is engaged?"

There was a little flush on the young man's cheeks and his stammer was not his usual fashionable stammer. I smiled and said: "No, Robert, she is not dead, and she is not wed, nor likely to be, and perhaps you remember the rest of the line."

It was a delicate matter and I did not know exactly how to go further, for I did not want to appear as an ambassador from my niece Cicely, even if I had been one, which I was not. Finally I concluded my broken sentence by saying as kindly as I could, without dropping at the same time a conventional tone, "I would straighten that matter out, Robert, if I were you."

Robert had completely regained his form while I had been talking. "Ah, that's very kind, old man, very kind," he said in the same tone as if he had been acknowledging the surrender of the last cab to be had on a wet night. "I just wanted to know, you know—member of your family—anything about you, you know, matter of interest. Good-night."

He buttoned up his coat, switched his cane, and, giving me another half nod, was off again. "You unmannerly young brute," I said to myself, and then I smiled—quite compassionately. I think. For why should not a man have the same credit for buttoning up a gaping wound with a pair of terra-cotta gloves under an English topcoat as a Spartan boy who covers the fox gnawing at his vitals under his Lacedæmonian cloak? It is sim-

ply a question of times, manners, costumes. I knew that the wound under Robert's topcoat was wide and deep, and inflicted in a manner that makes us believe either in the malevolence or the stupidity of fate. I knew, too, that the smart of it, revived by the story about my niece Cicely, had sent him after me to my club and thence after me to the theatre. His ideas of "form" and the necessity of self-repression had made him try on me that shallow ruse of a chance encounter and query.

It is a little strange to me that Cicely should have made the mistake about Robert that she did, for they used to play together in Rittenhouse Square when they were forty inches high, and once, having strayed outside the railings and into the territory of the Bœotians, beyond the Western end of Delancey Place, Robert gave battle to the barbarians for her sweet sake and brought her safely off with a bloody nose to his own account. Doubtless they had lovers' quarrels then and kissed and were friends without being chid. I do not wonder that Robert has that feeling for my niece that makes the gentlest wound from her harder to bear and slower to heal than the savagest stab from other hands. There is all that old childish relation, and, besides, it is rather the fashion involuntarily for all the young men I know to be, or to have been, or to be about to be, desiring introduction, in love with my niece. A man does not

generally like his relatives, but I am very fond of Cicely. I am told that she is a very impressive woman, and part of her charm lies in the fact that she is a sort of bugaboo to young men, with whose foolishness she has no patience. Patience she has none for me, and says that I am a trivial old child when I laugh at her new fads and notions about music, art, philosophy, and what not, for all book theories seem very absurd to me, who find all my knowledge of men in streets and houses, and to whom art matters are matters of amusement and not the *peine forte* and *dure* that people make of them nowadays with their struggles to comprehend all these various "masters." I do not know whether or not Robert took a real interest in the things that interested her that summer six years ago at Alexandria Bay. He may have done so, for he was but twenty-five, and had not got settled to business yet. Still, I rather think that when he rowed from the Thousand Island House Wharf every afternoon up into the Devil's Oven with her and sat and talked for hours about Spencer and Mill and Chopin and Ruskin, it was rather for the deep-set, dark eyes of the Sibyl in that curious cave and the waves of brown hair that curled down over her broad forehead than for any wisdom that might proceed from my niece Cicely's mouth, that turns down so delicately at the corners.

There was a small garrison at Sackett's Harbor then, I do not think there is now, and as it was

just around the corner, as one may say, of the river and the lake, which meet at Cape Vincent, the officers were forever running down to "the Bay" to see their friends among the summer visitors.

Among them was a young lieutenant of infantry, Blankenburgh, I think, by name, a nice young barbarian whom Cicely had met in Washington, and whose simple nature she greatly enjoyed for experimental purposes. He had had a campaign against the Piutes, or the Apaches, or some other of the red barbarians, whom white barbarians like this young lieutenant chase around that uninteresting Western country every summer. As a consequence he had as many tales as Othello, and nothing suited my niece Cicely better, after she had settled the artistic tendencies of the age with Robert in the afternoon at the Devil's Oven, than to relax her mind by listening to the young lieutenant's stories about the death of his major, the tremendous strategy of General Crook at the affair of Led Horse Cañon, and the real reasons, plagiarized by artful Lieutenant Blankenburgh from Captain McInness, formerly of the Papal Zouaves, why Custer's command was lost at the Big Horn. These séances took place at evening, in one corner of the third story veranda, while the band crashed out waltzes on the ballroom floor beneath, and the lights of the island villas across the steamboat channel threw crimson fire upon the dark water. During them my sister-in-law

would descant in my drowsing ears upon the deterioration of the assemblies since the first one she attended in the year 1855, young Blankenburgh would appropriate all the experiences of his arm of the service in order to keep his stream of anecdotes strictly personal for my niece's benefit, and Robert Martin would glower in the dark.

Cicely never paid any attention to him on these occasions. The lieutenant had the field in the evening, and in the afternoons, as she told me at the time, she would analyze his character to Robert in the Devil's Oven. They held long debates over the lieutenant's character, she said, just as if it were a piece of antique armor. They assigned it sometimes to the fifteenth and sometimes to the sixteenth century, again putting it clear back into mid-mediaevalism, and again finding some similar specimen of military bric-à-brac among the Highlanders of Dundee's time. Despite these daily revenges, Robert rowed off to his yacht across the crimson bars on the river's breast every night in very bad humor. Robert and some friends of his had hired a cabin sloop at Toronto, and were making a tour of the upper river and lower lakes.

The thing had gone on, I think, for five nights, when Lieutenant Blankenburgh mourned for the third time in that period the loss to the service in the death of General Canby in the lava beds, closing for the third time also by dilating upon that gallant officer's bravery. When the recital

was finished I saw ebullient symptoms in Robert, and kicked him. It was no use.

"It seems to me," he said in a coldly critical tone of voice, as much as possible as *The Saturday Review* would talk if it had a tongue instead of type, "that in our era we should look for very different outward manifestations of what is called bravery than in any past era. Don't you think so, Miss Draper?"

My sister-in-law had gone into her room, which was just behind where we were sitting, and lighted the gas to look for a shawl. The light shone very clearly on Cicely's face, and I saw her broad, white forehead contract in a frown. She did not like the notion, as I thought to myself, of Robert's breaking in upon her study of the lieutenant's character. Besides, being a clever girl, of course she knew that something unpleasant was coming. "I think you are talking a little over our heads," she answered; "but perhaps you can bring yourself down to our plane of thought. Do you think he can, lieutenant?"

"If he can show me how bravery is any different now from what it was a hundred years ago he is a pretty good lawyer," said the gallant warrior. "I believe you are a lawyer, ain't you, Mr. Martin?"

"Oh! I mean," Robert blurted out, "that we leave rows and rumpuses and riots to policemen and that sort of people nowadays. We pay taxes

for them to fight for us. I don't lay claim to the slightest degree of physical courage myself; neither does any sensible man I know of. If I were foolish enough to get into a fight, I hope I should be sensible enough to run away by the time it got fairly started. People to-day see that a man's body is merely a case full of valuable and perishable goods, and think him worse than a fool to go and get it stove in and smashed up in any way, and thus let its contents be lost to the world. Now, what I call courage is this: I have a little tailor at home who makes my clothes. He used to have a shop on Thirteenth Street. This spring he looked the thing over, took in all the points for and against his grand strategy, and put every cent he had into the rent and stock of a big shop on Chestnut Street.

"He chanced the savings of a lifetime when he signed that lease, and I was in his shop when the lawyers' clerk brought it down, and I saw his hand tremble when he did sign it. That was true courage."

If a Canadian bomb had come screaming across from one of the Martello towers in Kingston Bay, and plumped down on the parapet at Sackett's Harbor during guard-mount, Lieutenant Blankenburgh would not have been more surprised. What he thought, however, of being classed with policemen and subordinated in courage to tailors, we never knew. The last whistle of the boat for

Cape Vincent blew at that moment, and, making hurried adieux to everybody but Robert, he rushed for the stairway, and a moment later we saw him leap across the space between the dock and the steamer where the gang-plank had just been drawn in.

My niece Cicely rose when the lieutenant had left, and swept grandly away, her splendid shoulders thrown majestically back, and the tail of her long white gown sweeping the floor with an angry rustle like the train of an outraged queen. She vouchsafed no more attention to Robert than had the officer.

"You have done very nicely, young man," I said in what I pride myself on as my most satirical tone, after the young woman had gone. "You preach a sermon on the pacific tendencies of the age, and in doing so you insult an army officer in the presence of a lady, and descend pretty nearly to personal abuse in doing so. Yes, you have acted with that philosophic consistency which is the most chaste bit of vertu in the mental furniture of a gentleman of the nineteenth century."

I thought that this was a pretty good speech. I thought so or else I would not be able now to remember it.

"I don't care," snarled my young friend. "I wish he would take some notice of this in the way he'd like to, and I'd show him how far my principles agreed with my practice. Good heavens,

man! is some Western cowboy, whom a ranchero Congressman has lassoed and corraled at West Point, going to come into the society of gentlemen and utterly thwart all attempts at rational conversation with his brags and his lies about Indian killing? Not while I am about."

"Rancheros do not lasso cowboys," I said gravely. "Nor do I think that Blankenburgh is from the West, and if you knew my niece Cicely as well as I do you would let her have her way and be content with your afternoon innings. You have been very foolish."

Robert looked a little alarmed, and then grew peevish.

"Well," he said, "I don't see why she must take up her time with an ass like that."

"I don't see," I answered a little stiffly, "what reason there is for Miss Draper's being called upon to account to you for any portion of her time."

* * * * *

I was a little sorry next day for the snub I had given Robert, for a man in love is like a man in liquor—after a certain stage you must pass over everything he does. I was particularly sorry when I saw Robert pulling a forty-to-the-minute stroke alone in his wherry for the yacht at the same hour in the afternoon at which he used generally to set out on a leisurely sail up river, toward the Devil's Oven, with my niece dabbling her hand in the

water from the stern of one of the hotel skiffs. But the lieutenant did not come down that evening. I afterward heard that he took means of obliterating the remembrance of his insult when he reached the garrison, which incapacitated him for duty for a day or two, and so when I saw Robert radiantly hand my niece into a rowboat after tea that evening, I concluded that his period of penance was over and all was on its old footing.

* * * * *

It was two hours later, namely, at half-past nine o'clock, that I was smoking in front of the billiard-room when I saw Robert and my niece go up the board-walk and ascend the steps of the hotel. They were walking rapidly, and I saw that both were silent and distrait. As they passed Robert made an imperious sign for me to stay where I was, and I abandoned the intention, which he thus anticipated, of following them upstairs. Two minutes later he ran down the steps, seized me by the arm, and hurried me to the wharf. To my expectation he only said "Come" under his breath in a manner of suppressed excitement that I had only seen in one man before, and he was an unfortunate friend of mine who was on his way with me and a doctor in a cab to Kirkbride's.

I saw his hands tremble as he fumbled at the knot which secured in the wharf the skiff which he and my niece had just left. After thirty seconds

of vain effort to untie it, he drew his knife with a curse. The fisherman who was standing in a boat, steadying it and looking curiously in his face during his struggle with the painter, started back at his action. The young man observed the start and laughed loudly. I could see all the loungers in the lighted door of the billiard-room turn their heads at it.

"You needn't be afraid of me, O'Niel," he said, in a rasping voice. "I'm harmless, quite. Get in, Draper."

I had no particular fancy for trusting myself in a skiff in the middle of the St. Lawrence with a presumptive maniac, but a subtle intuition told me that it was either that or a scene, and I thought at the same time that with a crazy cunning he had calculated on my intuition for having his way. I obeyed. I saw the stout white ash blades of the oars bend like whalebone as he took the first savage stroke when our bow was pointed outward.

Six of the strokes carried us fairly into mid-channel, where we rested in the midst of the broad pathway of light thrown from the lamp of the little red-topped lighthouse on the reef. It was the sound of voices of men singing that arrested Robert's oars. The music floated across the water from a sail-boat, whose canvas I could dimly make out some distance down stream. Robert dropped his right oar, doubled his fist, and shook

it despairingly at the indistinct whiteness and then dropped his head in his hands and stared blankly at me.

"Mr. Draper," he said at last. He spoke in a voice from which his late fury had gone utterly. I thought it curious that he should put the handle to my name, which he was proud of having dropped some years before, and then I recognized a pathetic likeness, both in the tone and manner of his address, to that of a child in what it considered great trouble.

"I have a mother and two sisters at home, as you know, and if I hadn't I shouldn't have brought you out here. I should have come out alone, and I shouldn't have gone back."

All my sympathy vanished at this. "A threat of this kind is, perhaps, the most contemptible utterance that a man can make, Robert," I said. "If you wish to carry it out I shan't deter you—jump right overboard." I was caught with a cough at that moment, and remembering my extreme susceptibility to cold, I grew very angry. "If you've simply brought me out here," I said, "to pour out a lot of slop about my niece Cicely having refused you, you can row me right back to shore, and then you can go hang or drown or whatever you want. The family has escaped, I must say, a most disagreeable addition in the shape of a very deadly ass."

"Don't," he said, with a gesture of hopeless

deprecation, "that would be nothing to this. I never knew what a man's honor was, but now I've lost it. I do know now."

"For mercy's sake, man, what do you mean?" I cried.

I will not say what thought crossed my mind. "Go on! stop this infernal beating about the bush!"

The sound of the singing came more plainly over the water, and Robert raised his head and looked hatred at the white sail from behind which it came. "That cursed load of cads and waiters has cost me more than life," he said. "Listen!"

"We pulled up to Warner's to-night and heard the sunset gun," he said, heavily. "When it went off your niece asked me if I wasn't opposed to sunset guns anyway, as being warlike, you know, and we got thrashing over all the old straw that was chopped last night. She is very fond of argument, your niece," said Robert, with a melancholy break in his voice, that was as near a sob as a laugh. "She took the oars and I sat in the stern, and we drifted down between Friendly and Titusville. The talk stopped, and I was watching after it grew dusk, the figures of these New York fellows on Friendly, about their camp-fire in front of their tent on the bluff, you know. I heard a little gasp and the oars splashed in the water. I looked at your niece. I thought she was dying—so many women have a heart trouble, you know.

She swayed back in her seat and grasped the gunwale. I never saw such a staring black as her eyes, nor such a dead white as her face. She tried to speak once, then she gasped out, 'Behind—look—behind!'

"One of these fellows on the bluff gave a whoop at the same minute. I wouldn't have known what was up, but I heard a soft slapping noise behind and the creak of a boom. I rose and turned like a flash—there they were just on us, that wall of canvas right above my head. Your niece pointed to the oars—she could not speak—there was no time for that. I doubled back and sprang for their halyards. I must have looked over my shoulders while I was still in the air, I think, for my first consciousness when I slid down the rope and tumbled on their deck was that the boat was safe, carried out of harm's way by the force of my jump. She gave a little shriek when I jumped; that was what made me look, I suppose.

"The fellows on the bluff cheered, and one of them jumped up and down and banged on a kettle. Then those brutes began to apologize. They were excursionists who had hired those niggers out to sing for them, and they were beating to windward; that's why we did not hear them sooner.

"In the midst of all the excitement your niece coolly backed that skiff up to the sail-boat and waited for me to get in."

Robert broke off in his narrative here. He wrung

his hands like a woman and choked in his throat. "See here," he said, almost sobbingly, "it's your niece, you know, and all that; but by gad, I don't think—I don't think that a man ever felt quite for a woman as I did when I made that jump. If it had been a royal mail steamer I was jumping for I'd have done the same. My God, what it was to see her so frightened! And then," he continued, when she came around so quick and backed that skiff up, and didn't faint or tremble at all, as most women would when the danger was over, I felt so proud of her, and felt so proud that that quick thought of mine had saved her. Excuse me, but I felt as if she was mine.

"She spoke first when I got into the boat," continued Robert. "Her voice startled me. It was very cold, and yet it was a little forlorn. 'You had better take the oars and row me home, Mr. Martin,' she said.

"She took the stern, and I began to pull for the hotel, not speaking, for I didn't understand her manner. All at once it struck me that perhaps the close shave to what she might think was death might have set her thinking about a lot of things that they preach about, and I tried to rally her.

"'Come,' I said, 'it wasn't a man-of-war. I don't believe it would have sunk us anyhow.' I spoke in a jesting tone. The look she gave me struck me dumb. I pulled ahead. Just here in mid-channel the knowledge of what she thought

hit me all at once. I dropped the oars. I ripped out an oath, I could not help it. Then I checked myself, and said: 'I beg pardon, it was very rude.' 'Rude!' she flashed back at me. 'Rude,' then her voice grew forlorn again, and she smiled sadly as she said, 'that is a very philosophic term for it.'"

Robert dropped his head on his hands again, and when he raised it it had that pathos of utter defeat. "You see," he said, "how completely at cross purposes we were. She was so full of that one idea that she hadn't even heard me swear. I shut my mouth then and somehow pulled to the dock. I didn't know we were there until the boat jammed against it, Mr. Draper," said Robert, solemnly. "And your niece cried and gave me her hand at the door, and she said: 'I am glad you said what you did about bravery last night. It shows me that you only acted on your convictions about—about such matters.'"

* * * * *

"Good heavens!" it was I that spoke. I had listened shiveringly to Robert's wandering and broken tale, being more concerned with the fact that we had drifted a good mile down the chilly stream—it is always cold on the St. Lawrence at night—than with the thread of the narrative, but as he finished the thought flashed on me as it had on him, that my niece Cicely, having put together

his words of the night before and his actions in the boat, had concluded that he had jumped to save himself. "My poor boy," I said, and groaned.

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He would not harken to my trying to set the matter right, but cut short his yachting and went home the next day. Long ago, on my own responsibility, I told my niece of what an error she had made. I think that is one reason why she remains unmarried. As for him, as I said, the wound is deep and wide yet, for all the six years of healing. I would like to see the matter arranged, but I went as far as I could when I told him that he would better straighten it out, for I am not going to throw my niece Cicely at any man's head.

Mr. Draper's Diary

MAY 22d.

“**D**ROLL to be dead in
such fine weather.” *Being a
Record Kept by
a Man
of the World
of Three
Days in His
Life*
That runs in my head
these May days. I

found it somewhere in the rhymed soliloquy of a Petroleuse waiting against the wall of Père la Chaise, after the Commune, for the firing party of *gens-d'armes*. The *chic* of it struck me then—but now. It does not sound the same. I walked up Chestnut Street in the sun this afternoon, when all this strolling, gossiping town of ours was out—there is no more holiday sight in the world, I think. I passed the brokers about Third Street; the politicians along State House Row, in front of the newspaper offices and the hotels; the women, whose carriages were drawn up at the curbs in front of the jewellers and the bonnet-shops. There was no group and no carriage from which I had not a bow, and the fine weather will continue and there will be one less bow to the groups and the carriages. Droll, indeed, to be dead now.

Then again another line that I have ever before me in newspaper type, “A familiar figure will be

missed from Chestnut Street"; and another, "of a complication of diseases." That is better than being "the body of an unknown man," at least; I have had two friends who were "bodies of unknown men" ultimately.

Old Abercrombie is a great liar, being a "society" doctor, and grown mendacious in the hushing up of scandals, but when he gave me two months to live—it is shortened down to seven weeks now—I have no doubt he told the truth. Two months—that takes me to the 15th of July, and I ate an ice at the Norths' Bar Harbor cottage last 15th of July evening. There will be the same spoon this year in some else's fingers, and that is the life of a man.

"Of a complication of diseases." One reads that line a great many times and thinks it merely a way of covering ignorance of the cause of death. But no; it means this, that a man has "discounted." His heart and his brain and his lungs and the rest of his vitals are stewards of his great estate. He comes into it at manhood and begins to "discount." Overdrafts and overdrafts the stewards honor with a grumble, with a woeful prophecy of pay-day. And the young spendthrift laughs at their woebegone ways and overdraws again. But the time comes when the stewards say the purse is empty, master. The land is lean, the bank is broken, they close the account. And then the line "of a complication of diseases." I have

written in a parable. I became so interested in it that I forgot that it was about myself. It is growing dusk. When the day is over I shall begin on the seventh week, and then to the sixth; and what a little, little time six weeks is.

* * * * *

MAY 23d.

To go maundering in a graveyard. This is edifying. Doubtless I shall make a proper ending, after all. I went down this afternoon and strolled among the graves at old St. Peter's. There is a good platoon of headstones there with my name on them, and I felt a relationship with them for the first time. The latest date of the lot is 1840. They were at evening service as I went through the old gateway that I remembered passing so often with my mother when we lived still on Fourth Street, below Spruce, and I heard them chant the *Deus Misereatur*, "God be merciful unto us." What a wailing supplication it is. I passed around the church wall and stood among the mounds. There was a slim figure of a man in black pacing one of the walks, with his head bowed and his hands clasped behind him. I saw by the manner of his dress that he was an ecclesiastic, though very young, and raised my hat in accordance with a good old fashion that I have always kept up. "What," he said as I was about to pass him, "Mr. Draper, don't you know me?"

"Bless me," said I, for my head was full of the

wailing chant and the memories of the sunlight that used to fall on my mother's head when she sat in our pew, and how the sound of the trees in the wind coming through the open windows used to put me to sleep in the summer time, and my grandfather's funeral and all, that I hadn't recognized him. "Why, it's Ralph Larremore. Ah! so you did—you did," for I remembered a wild sort of a boy who had suddenly seen the error of his ways, as it is called, and had taken orders some three years before.

"Yes," he said, "I did, Mr. Draper."

"And you are a priest now, I suppose," said I, "and thunder against our iniquities once a week here in the old church."

"Hardly against yours," he replied, half sadly. "You know too many of my old follies," which was true, I having been father confessor to him and many other wild youngsters. "Besides," he went on, "my deaconate is not over till Christmas, and then I shall give up my assistantship and ask for work in the city mission."

"Bless me," I said again, "Ralph, why all this mortification of the flesh?"

"If the Church," he said, "is not to become a byword among the people she must send her picked men among the poor—among the heathen. There they lie, Mr. Draper," he said, solemnly sweeping his hand southward toward the section of the city whose streets we only know by name

through the frequency of their appearance in police reports. "Did you ever go among these courts and alleys, see the sodden, drugged misery, the hideous shapes that vice and crime and disease have made? Physical shapes I mean, Mr. Draper, warped and twisted likenesses of humanity, faces contorted like the face of Hugo's laughing man, and that for the want of the Gospel of Christ, for the want of men to go into those places, not with the cursed materialist philanthropy of our societies for the grading of pauperism, but with the gift of tongues to bring men to see the fount of all charity."

The boy's figure was erect, his cheeks were flushed, and his voice rang out till the other idlers in the graveyard turned their heads to look at him. To my mind he figured the preaching friar to perfection, and so—leaning against my grandfather's headstone, for we had reached there on our walk and I felt weak—I told him. He smiled bitterly. "That is another curse," he said. "The best among us are wasted in dilettanteism in pagan, sauntering art. You immediately put one into perspective—a picture of Vibert—you do not heed a word I say; but, pardon me, you are an older man than I, and my zeal you will think that of a new convert."

"Yes, Ralph," said I, "I am a much older man, a thousand years I think, and I have come down to look at the graves of my ancestors, which is a sign of dotage."

"I do not believe in graves nor in gravestones," he said, after we had chatted a little while over family alliances, which some of the names on the stones suggested. "They rather hinder us in our efforts to realize the spiritual life of our dead. They only bring up the associations of the body."

"And what may help us to realize that life? Can it be realized?" I asked. He seemed to cast about him for an answer. Through the windows of the church we could hear the notes of the *Nunc Dimittis* chanted softly and with a cadence telling us plainly as sight might do that those who chanted knelt. It was not a pulpit trick—the boy was too sincere to become hysterical. He pointed to a headstone that was shaped in the form of a cross.

I nodded comprehension of his meaning, but the situation was awkward for a moment, as he saw that he had not carried me with the rush of his enthusiasm, and felt the brake that my attitude had put on him.

When we parted, showing a little nervousness, he said: "Mr. Draper, do you remember one night, when there were cabs waiting in front of the club and I was just going out for a night, with a lot of fellows, and you met me in the hall and said, 'You're spending to-morrow to-night, I see?'"

I told him that I did, and smiled as, of course, I saw the drift of his talk. "It's a good way to begin that realization," he continued rapidly,

"to look at the thing merely from that selfish standpoint."

"Ah, yes," I thought as at sunset I dragged myself out of the graveyard, "but I have spent my to-morrow." And yet—and yet when his Abercrombie comes to tell him; and poor lad, it may not be so many years hence—he was not well enough to get through his evening services, which was the reason why I met him among the graves—he will have more to think of than "a familiar figure" and a "complication of diseases."

"O bubble world, whose colors in a moment break and fly." There—there is another line to run in my head to-night at dinner. But two-sevenths of my seventh week are gone, and how is a man in forty days to exchange the bubble world for another one, and how has a man of honor the assurance to offer forty worthless days off the fag end of a miserable existence for that which is called eternity?

* * * * *

MAY 24th.

"Jack, Jack, you are dying." There will no other line but that run in my head now; for that line has driven all the others out. But, ah, what a time will this thirty-nine days be—thirty-nine years, rather. I shall sit here as one follows another, and I shall consume my heart with longing to hear the voice, the rustle of the dress, the foot-fall, to see the eyes, the tears, to smell the scent

of the hair of a woman who is three squares away in Trinity Place, and the Sahara might as well be between us. Thirty-nine centuries. And what will they be to her? She will not sleep to-night nor any night till I am gone, and then will she forget? She will not, I think, and there is the curse. For she said when I went away: "I will have thirty years of life, perhaps, after you. Oh, Jack, it is awful." Oh, if I were a boy again and could do as I did twenty years ago, walk before her window in the night and look up and think of her as mine. But now, my God, I think I would go mad. Her window is not her window. It is half his.

What manner of babblement is this? I, Mr. John Draper, forty-nine years old and having thirty-nine days by high medical authority to live, went to call this afternoon on Mrs. Katherine Fearing, a woman forty years old, to whom I was engaged when she was Kate Cabell, and who threw me over because I was poor and wild and her father had lost money in sugar.

That was written in blood.

She came all cool in white, smiling through her Persian portiere, in answer to my card, and I swear that there was no more sign of a wrinkle in her white forehead nor of gray in her black hair that waved over it than when she cried and kissed me, and said good-bye in the parlor of her father's house in Spruce Street in the year after the war.

"You are going out of town soon, I think," said I, "and so I called." "Yes," she said, "and when we come back I hope to see you oftener, Mr. Draper."

No other man or woman on the footstool has known, me since Abercrombie gave me that news, to show any sign that I thought not to live forever; but a great wave of bitterness and longing swept over me as I looked at her. Though I had not thought of her or the old affair until this day, the contrast between us—she in her Abraham's bosom of health and happiness, and I a very Dives in hell and athirst—with that lonely death grimacing nearer, made me speak. Yet I only said: "I shall not be here when you return, Mrs. Fearing."

"Ah," she said, "what a happiness is unincumbrance. Will it be Europe or California?"

"Further than either, I think," said I, "and yet not beyond the limits of the city."

I had no mind to beg for pity, I had no thought that she cared. I wish now that Abercrombie had cut me off two months earlier rather than I had spoken.

I sat by a window over which there was a heavy curtain. I saw her lips, ah, her lips, tremble, and her features paled too, as she said: "Indeed?" Of a sudden she arose, walked with a step a trifle unsteady across the floor, and with her long, white fingers clutched the curtain. She stood over me.

Was it life come back? Had the beggarly pinch of sand left in my glass stopped dropping? Could my poor blood thrill so? She pulled the curtain aside. The afternoon sun fell full upon my face, bloodless and rimmed of eye, hollow of cheek and white of lip. I stared dazedly at her, and then winced a little at the thought of what a wreck she saw. Ah, how this vanity sticks by one.

Her face grew blanched as mine. She looked frightenedly about the room. She fell on her knees and clasped one of my hands convulsively in hers. "Jack, Jack," she whispered. It was more startling than a shout. "Jack, you are dying." She buried her head in my lap, and I felt her tears hot on my hands. How her heart beat, and mine—I thought I was dying. Would to God I had.

"Kate," I said, bending close, till my lips almost touched her neck and the stray wisp of her hair brushed my face, "Kate, do you care?"

She raised her head and looked at me through the tears with which her eyes swam. Ah, how lovely she was, with her head thrown back like that of a Madonna in a picture. Then she raised her hands to my face, and drew me toward her till our lips met.

* * * * *

Ay, Dives verily, and well-rounded is the parable, for she cannot give me the cup of cool water, and so her seeming heaven is hell, too. And I

cannot live without her and I cannot die and leave her alone.

Oh, Kate! Kate!

* * * * *

Dr. Abercrombie's prognosis did not, of course, take into consideration the occurrence of a sudden shock or a violent emotion, such as that which closed Mr. Draper's diary with a too violent demand upon his enfeebled heart. He was found dead in his room, with these sheets lying before him, on the morning of the 25th of May. He had expired, it was concluded, before midnight, and although he had fallen forward on his table, it was plain that his last attitude in life was one of reaching forward eagerly for some object which he saw or imagined himself to see—a phenomenon not unusual at such times, but one which the physicians in their misty way of statement call indifferently the cause and the effect of the disturbance of the circulation resulting in death.

The Two Cornets of Monmouth

I



THE line of lights that had fringed the abatis of the British redoubts far to the north of the merry-

**A Strange
Meeting
on Clinton's
Retreat
to New York**

makers at Walnut Grove had died away, and only the many-hued lamps of the Meschianza cast their reflections into the pale blue sky of the May midnight, and surprised the sober waters of the placid Delaware with their glare. The roll of the fusileer and yager drums throbbing fiercely there on the north and the sound of the dropping shots of the pickets had died away, too, and given undisputed possession of the echoes of Philadelphia town to the scraping of the fiddles in the Wharton mansion gardens, where the flower of the British garrison danced away the night with the loyalist beauty of the province in honor of the departing commander, General Sir William Howe.

Captain the Right Honorable Andrew Cathcart, who, when the line of lights sprang up at the

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northern redoubts, had drawn away from the dancers, and listened intently to the throbbing of the drums and the dropping of the shots, gave a little sigh of relief as the lights and the sounds died, and then his forehead was wrinkled with a frown. He stamped his spurred heel on the walk of the box-hedged alley where he stood, and looked down contemptuously at the spangled tunic of red and white silk which he had donned for the day instead of the scarlet coat of the Seventeenth Light Dragoons, and ejaculated: "What d—d nonsense! Knights of the Burning Mountain! Gad, we are indeed Knights of the Burning Rome, with our Nero fiddling——" He started, for a light step on the gravel caught the quick ear of the man who, despite the fact that he had come to the revolting colonies a lord's son and a dandy captain of a crack cavalry regiment, turned out as alert a scouting rough rider as any one of Simcoe's Tory Corps of Rangers. Next he heard a light laugh, and turning, saw the towering head-dress of a lady of the Blended Rose come nodding toward him over a pair of the most sparkling eyes and the archest mouth in the province.

"I think I heard you muttering treason, Sir Captain, or is it Sir Knight?" laughed the arch lips under the head-dress.

"What, Mistress Kitty Pryor, are you here?" replied the officer, his surly mood changing to one of pleased surprise.

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The high head-dress nodded assent, and then Mistress Kitty broke out: "Yes, and have been all the evening, and never a word or a smile could I get from Miss Nancy White's Knight of the Blended Rose, with his motto of 'Love and Honor.'"

The dragoon flushed at this reference to the transfer of his attentions, during Mistress Kitty's absence in Newcastle, to the only belle of New York's high Tory society whose presence graced the Meschianza, and muttered, "Small wonder that I did not recognize you in those trappings."

Mistress Kitty looked down at his pseudo-Turkish apparel, laughed, and said: "But, captain, were it not for these trappings I should not be here, for they rightly belong to Peggy Shippen, whose coming was prevented at the last moment by a delegation of Quakers, who waited on her father, and protested against the—the—Turks, and so I'm here enjoying myself, and Peggy's at home crying her eyes out. But pray, captain, continue your soliloquy which I interrupted. By my span-gles, but you looked a noble, sorrowful, sightly knight in the moonlight."

"Sightly I was not in these tinsellings," said the dragoon, soberly. "But sorrowful indeed, I swear by a graver oath than mine own spangles, at this folly of ours, which hath kept us here feasting and dancing and drinking all winter, when we should have been subduing the rebels."

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"By burning them in Roxborough barns, eh, captain?" asked Mistress Kitty, with a demure side glance from beneath her full head-dress.

The trooper flushed at the mention of this feat of his which in the previous December had warmed all hearts in the freezing Continental camp to vows of vengeance against him and his corps.

"The rebels would not surrender," he said, in a pained tone, "and I fired their untenable fortress. 'Twas within the laws of war. Yes," he continued firmly, "rather would I be making such poor war as that than mooning here. André, from his history books in Dr. Franklin's library, says 'tis like the Carthaginians at Capua, where they spent such a winter to be beaten in the spring, and I wonder if the Carthaginian commander had a jezebel like that Loring woman? And 'tis the more shame for that the rebels are so bold and stubborn. Why, listen," and he sank his voice, "they told you ladies but now to quiet your alarms, that the lights on the redoubts at the upper side of town were an illumination in honor of this event, and the firing a *feu de joie*. 'Twas no illumination, but those reckless devils of McLane's firing the abatis with Greek-fire out of tin kettles, and the *feu de joie* came from the loaded muskets of our foot beating them off."

"What madmen!" said Mistress Kitty, serious at last, her face paling, and a suppressed tremble

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of excitement in her voice. "McLane's horse, you say? Why, I have a cousin—not the Newcastle cousin—a cornet in McLane's, and he was always a wild boy. I'll warrant he was there."

Captain Cathcart laughed a rather harsh laugh. "Why, Mistress Peggy Shippen flies higher than Mistress Kitty Pryor. She has, they say, a general (Arnold) among the rebels, but Mistress Kitty only a cornet, and in McLane's night-riders! Ha! ha!"

"Oh, he's no cornet of mine," said the girl, flushing. "He might have been, but my father broke off all that when Robert espoused the pa—the rebel cause."

"Well, your cornet cousin will hardly wreak his vengeance on my devoted head this year," said the captain seriously, "for, Mistress Kitty, I'll tell you a secret that all the world will know to-morrow; Sir Henry Clinton's first order on taking command will be to march for New York. We're going to evacuate the town."

"Good land!" ejaculated Mistress Kitty, surprised out of her manners and using a homespun provincial expletive instead of one of the pretty little lady oaths which the British officers had taught her. "And what's to become of *us*?"

"You'll be packed in ill-smelling troop ships, and taken a sea-voyage around to New York," replied the captain, laughing.

"Oh, those nasty troop ships!" cried the girl,

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with a grimace. "Doubtless we'll sail on one that brought a cargo of Hessians over. Oh, I wish I were a man! I'd rather fight my way to New York, and kill my own cousin on the road, than go by sea."

"Egad! wouldn't you, though?" said the captain, smiling surprisedly at the ring of spirit in the girl's tones. "Well, we must back to the rest. Say, do you know that I grew so warm in that sham joust to-day that I had nigh run Winyard through the body before the herald called on us to stop?"

Up the box-hedged alley toward the lights and fiddles the mock knight and lady went, and as they passed, the towering head-dress and the antique helmet drew close together in a whispered conversation which was pressed with eagerness by Captain Cathcart, and answered with expostulatory giggles by Mistress Kitty.

The dragoon surrendered his charge to Lieutenant Sloper, her cavalier, at the door of the great banquet hall, wainscoted with the one hundred and forty pier-glasses which had been borrowed from the walls of every house of Tory quality in the city to grace the occasion. Then he passed into the card-room and frowned, for at a long table was Gen. Sir William Howe, flushed with wine and deep in the mysteries of pharaoh. He was surrounded by the dissolute boy ensigns, lieutenants, and cornets of the army, who chiefly followed his

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example in that Capuan winter of '78. At his elbow, in powder, paint, feathers, and jewels, was that jezebel of whom Cathcart had spoken, the wife of the Boston refugee commissary of prisoners, the chance rhyming of whose name with the participle "snoring" had held her up to the scornful ridicule of the whole country in the satire of the "Battle of the Kegs."

Cathcart sighed. Yet as he turned away in search of Nancy White, the young soldier's gloom was lighted by a gleam of mirth, and he laughed several times to himself as if a thought of past or future fun were flitting through his brain.

II

When Admiral Lord Howe's great fleet, cumbered on all its decks with a crowd of cowering refugees, was but a cloud of white sail against the green slopes of Red Bank, and the rear-guard of Gen. Sir Henry Clinton's army a vivid spot of scarlet disappearing in the foliage of Gloucester Point, McLane's Horse rode round the frowning shoulders of the line of northern redoubts, scampered by the hastily deserted barracks of the Northern Liberties out on the Delaware River front, saw those two sights, and cheered. It was the morning of the 18th of June, a month to a day after the Meschianza. Then, while the convalescing commandant Arnold's little army of occu-

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pation marched in after them, they resumed their duties of scouting and patrol, varied by the amusements of hunting refugees and mildly harrying Quakers.

But one tall cornet, Robert Colladay by name, sought a half-day's leave of absence from his daring chief, and rode over the draw across Dock Creek, past the Blue Anchor Tavern, despite the fact that the tongue of his servant Cicero was lolling a good inch out of his black face with thirst, and so down among the pleasant country houses of Southwark.

A wealth of June roses bloomed in the garden of the gray colonial mansion where he dismounted, and the velvet of the shaven lawn was just as bright a green as on the day three years ago when he strode across it to offer his sword and services to the Committee of Safety, without a backward look either at the angry figure of his uncle Pryor in the doorway, or the tear-stained face of Mistress Kitty peering wistfully through the filmy curtains of the deep parlor window and the thick blooms of the rose trellis. He had often passed the house since in the two years before the British occupation, riding to guard or scouting duty in the marshes below the town, but this was the first time he had halted there. He knew there would be some rough revenges executed upon those who had fêted the invader through the long, terrible winter while the Continental army lay starving

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outside the cozy Quaker town, and he desired to use his good offices for the choleric old loyalist who had forbidden him his house.

The first answer to his clamorous siege of the heavy oaken door by means of the brazen lion's-head knocker was a reverberating echo. It told of walls within stripped of the tapestry hangings which had been the pride of his stately aunt, though the loves of Æneas and Dido, which had been faithfully chronicled thereon, had been a matter of some scandal to the broadbrim element of the town's *ton*. Finally an iterate application of the hilt of his long dragoon sabre brought to the door a black face surmounted by a powdered wig, which paled with fear to the olive green of the livery coat beneath it.

Hannibal, the Pryor family butler, gazed doubtfully upon the frayed buff facings of the streaked and faded blue coat and the toeless jack-boots of the big rebel soldier who claimed to be Master Robert. When the latter's identity was with difficulty established, the butler told the brief story of the family's flight. They had packed up all the plate-glass and portable valuables, and taken them on board the transport *Ramillies* the night before. The furniture had been sent to Newcastle, where he was to follow it.

"And Mistress Kitty?" asked Robert impatiently.

"She just done gone two houahs ago," replied

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Hannibal. "She stay all night at Massa Wharton's, and Captain Cathcart scooted heh on bo'd dis mawnin'. He been berry 'tentive lately, Massa Robert. Tell you, Massa Robert, she cry heh pretty eyes mos' out to see de last of dis house and dis niggah."

"Cathcart—that savage. A pretty escort," Robert growled fiercely in his throat at the remembrance of the Roxborough incident. Yet doubtless he was a favored suitor in his uncle's eyes, and his attentions a marked condescension which would atone for the work of the Continental confiscation agents, who would shortly busy themselves with the lands, tenements, and hereditaments of the Pryor family. A lord's son, a favorite of Clinton's, a captain of dragoons—doubtless Kitty's tears were not so much at leaving the home of her childhood as at the prospect of leaving her lover at the Front Street landing-stairs.

He stopped on his way back to town at his father's house in Market Street, and found it stripped and pillaged. Making a mental memorandum of the damage to write to the owner, who was in his seat in the Congress at Lancaster, he ate a hearty dinner at the City Tavern. Then he found his colonel, and hurried to his tailor's to inform him that McLane's Horse were ordered to join the main army at Coryell's Ford, and that, if he sat up all night to do it, his new uniform must be ready by morning.

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III

Meantime Captain Cathcart was silencing the fire of jests of his brother officers of the rear-guard by introducing his new cornet—vice Verney, killed at Germantown—as the cause of his delay in joining them.

“Mr. Inskip, gentlemen,” he said, “who hath just come over in the suite of the Peace Commissioners, and landed from Billingsport this morning.”

The newcomer was warmly welcomed, and proceeded to express, with some boyish braggadocio, his regret at joining the army when in retreat.

“Don’t worry about that, my lad,” said Captain Montessoro of the Guards, who had just come galloping back from the head of the long cumbrous column. “You’ll have as much work in this retreat as you’re likely to get on any advance this side of the infernal regions.” He laughed to see the color leave the cheek of the boasting boy as he spoke, and then said: “Captain Cathcart, the general bids me tell you to take your troop, and scout northward between here and the river, parallel to the army. He is advised that the enemy may cross the river just above Philadelphia. If you do not find the enemy, you are to rejoin the army at Mount Holly.”

The First Troop of the Seventeenth Light Dragoons, just in sight of Haddonfield and supper,

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moved swiftly northward on its lonely dangerous duty.

Captain Montessor stood and watched the jingling little clump of sabres with a glow of admiration at the captain's ready response to the order. Then, as a peal of laughter was wafted back on the evening wind, he said:

"Gad! Cathcart may laugh on the other side of his face before he sees the colors again. But what the deuce is the boy scolding him about?"

IV

All the sunburnt sides of the scorching road from Kingston to Freehold on the last Sunday of that eventful June were strewn with well-worn Continental coats, but Baron von Steuben and Cornet Robert Colladay rode in the van of the second division with collars buttoned stiff to their perspiring necks. By the new inspector-general it was thought a part of his liberal contract to go to war precisely as the great Frederick did. He carried it out to the letter, and when the coat-throwing began, which was just after the sun got a fair reach at the gleaming gun-barrels over the long plain which stretched away to the sea, he grumbled fiercely. "If dey drow away deir goats on de march," he said, "vhy vill dey not drow away deir guns in de fight?" These remarks were addressed to the cornet as the only other buttoned-up man

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with the commander-in-chief's staff, albeit he was the lowest there in rank. Robert grunted a sympathetic assent to the baron's complaint. He did not tell him that he had got his post of the command of a full troop as headquarters guard largely because of his possessorship of a new uniform, and therefore kept it buttoned up. Officers with new suits were scarce in the third year of the war. The commander-in-chief was not averse to a bit of military millinery about headquarters. Robert's tall stature and fine face made him a likely candidate for the post of commander of the *garde de corps*. Robert's new uniform made him a winner.

"De Cheneral dinks dot Charles Lee hass no stomag for de fight out dere," continued the baron, pointing to where the steeple of Freehold church was dimly seen above the leaves, and whence already came the boom of cannon; "bud I, Von Steuben, say, der teufel take de Cheneral of de advance. You want goot gorbrals, goot gorbrals mit swidges, dey make de soldiers stant."

A gay voice from a boyish-looking horseman who had just joined them broke in upon the inspector-general's monologue. "A most excellent sentiment, baron, one which it would have done my lamented grandfather, Jonathan Edwards, good to hear. Switch before sword or sceptre. Though, by my faith! I think he'd have switched me and the whole army, if his supply of birch had held

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out, for going to war on Sunday morning in his adopted State of New Jersey."

The Prussian martinet looked fixedly at the newcomer for a moment, and then replied: "You haf an English broverb, spare de rod, iss it, and spoil de—de kinde? I dink your grantfadder spared de rod, Golonel Purr, if all I hear iss true."

"Likely! likely!" laughed the boyish colonel, who was an acting brigadier that day. "But, zounds, here's one who hasn't."

And as he spoke, a blown countryman came pounding up, beating the heaving sides of a sweating plough-horse, and almost running Robert down in his anxiety to see the commander-in-chief. "Washington! Washington!" he puffed. "My news is for his ear." Then catching sight of a very large man on a white horse in the centre of the little knot of horsemen, he blurted out, "General Lee is beaten, sir. The redcoats marched from Middletown. Our men are up to their chins in mud. Oh, haste, sir, haste, or all is lost!"

The large man on the white horse turned an angry crimson as he spurred forward through the crowd to hear the uncouth courier's broken speech more closely. "Impossible!" he ejaculated. "Why, there has been no musketry fire as yet. Surely Charles Lee has not fled at sight of the enemy and the first discharge of a field-piece. Colonel Hamilton," he said, sharply, turning to a dark-faced alert young aid at his side, "hear this

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man's story when he gets his breath. If he has lied, give him a dozen lashes. Cornet Colladay, your troop. Baron, attend me, pray."

A long white mane and tail floated out before Robert's astonished eyes like a cloud as Washington's spurs sank deep in his charger's sides, and the maddened horse sprang forward on the sandy road.

Now Robert Colladay had followed the fox in many a hot cross-country gallop, and ridden winner in many a race with Mistress Kitty Pryor's colors on his whip, but never had he such a pace set for him as the raging commander-in-chief set on that road to Freehold. He could see distinctly the broad blue back of the great man and the flying cloud-like mane and tail of his great charger. All else in the hot horizon swam red and dizzy before his eyes. Backward he turned once, and saw the panting horses of the body-guard and suite trailing out in a foam-flecked race-track string. Baron Steuben, with his stiff foreign seat, was in the rear of Robert's troop of Pennsylvania fox-hunters, all spurring for piqued pride that a Virginia fox-hunter should so shame them. Colonel Hamilton, his handsome face strained with an anxiety that showed the countryman had told no lie, was closing the distance between him and his chief on a blooded roan, and bade fair soon to regain his side. And far beyond, for miles down the long column, Robert saw a strange electric

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effect, as one may see when some one strikes the head of a huge snake and its great coils straighten and shoot out as its long sinuous body feels the sting of the blow, and it darts forward for revenge. Aids and orderlies were riding hot-foot from brigade to brigade and regiment to regiment, to close and hurry them; and as the fleeting figures of these horsemen halted a moment at the head of each command, there came cheers wafted through the red dust to the silent awed cornet and the silent raging commander spurring in the lead of this fierce race.

Ay, there it was. As they turned the corner of Freehold church the scene burst full upon them. Like files of gray geese the coatless Continentals, in their homespun shirts, were fleeing through the sunburnt fields in a wild tumult of flight; and as they galloped on, a white fleece of smoke darted out from above a hedgerow, and then a flash of flame.

Then Robert, who had never before seen war from the commander's clear vantage-ground, but only such broken bits of it as the soldier sees while waiting word to charge, wondered a little as he saw, after the bright flash of flame, gaps here and there in the straggling file of gray geese, as men threw up their hands and fell writhing. And then he knew that each was a dying or a wounded man, and he breathed a harder breath than the hot race had pumped from him, and clutched his

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sword-hilt, and started as if to ride full at the hedgerow, beyond which ribbon on ribbon of bright scarlet was moving forward after the straggling files as steadily as if each was tied to the belt of the guidon-bearer marching stiffly at the right of each rank.

But the broad blue back in front of him made straight at a portly perspiring officer who mopped his streaming brow beneath a tree a quarter of a mile beyond the church, and exclaimed to a slim excited young foreigner who was urging some course upon him: "My God, Monsieur le Marquis, I told you they would not stand before British soldiers!"

Then Cornet Colladay felt a great fear in his heart. It was not for himself nor of the enemy, but for his chief, and not either that his chief should come to harm. But as he saw him riding straight at the portly officer, he feared that his rage had lost all bounds, and that he would ride the other down. And when he reined his foaming horse, his great bony right hand worked and clutched the air, and made as if to tear the recreant general from his saddle.

But the wrathful commander reined his temper as he had reined his horse; and though he spoke in thunder tones, and his face worked with contortions of suppressed rage, which made his large features look like those of a terrible demigod, he only said: "Sir, whence come this disorder and

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confusion? I desire to know the reasons—the reasons, sir?”

“Reasons, sir, reasons,” answered General Lee hotly. “Two months of drill does not make soldiers, even if administered by a pupil of Frederick. They will not stand.”

“What example do you give them?” began the commander. “But I will deal with that after. Do you, sir, re-form your men behind our columns. M. de Lafayette, ride with all speed to General Greene. Tell him to hasten, on his life.”

The slim young Frenchman, who, Robert found time to notice, had with difficulty restrained himself from following the customs of his country and the dictates of his heart by kissing his chief on both cheeks, bowed and smiled delightedly, and was off like the wind. Then the commander, the body-guard, and Colonel Hamilton, who had come galloping up with the rest of the suite, were enveloped in the stream of panting, perspiring fugitives.

“Form in front of the church, men,” cried their leader. “Our friends are near at hand. The day is young yet, and you shall make them pay for their winter quarters before sunset.”

There was a feeble cheer, and a lank agueish Virginian of Varnum’s cried, as he staggered past, a grisly spectacle of blood and mire:

“They formed us in a bog, general. We had to run or sink to China.”

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But the general bit his lip, for all his cheery exhortation. Far from the northeast, beyond the roofs of Monmouth, the thin note of a bugle came down the hot wind of the Sabbath morning, and the signs that the cavalry were about to be put in against the wreck of Lee's division were more fearsome than the crashing volleys of the advancing lines of red infantry, even though the bullets pattered among the leaves and pitted the roadside wall.

"I will stay with you here and die, general."

Robert heard Colonel Hamilton's low musical voice this much, and then around the corner of Freehold church came a sweeter music far. It was the measured roll of the second division's drums, and cheering, rank on rank of Ramsey's and Stewart's brigades swept grandly into the fight. Heads stiffly up, eyes straight to the front, arms rigidly apart, they marched, coming to a swift present as they passed the kindling eye of the chief, who responded promptly as the blade of each officer curved a graceful salute to the head of the army.

"Beautiful, baron, beautiful!" cried the delighted chief, as the inspector-general hurled a heavy German anathema at an ensign whose spon-toon was sloped at an angle unknown to the Prussian manual. "And now to post them. This will be no Germantown!"

No Germantown, indeed, but no Princeton either. Greene was on the right, with his New

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Englishers. Lord Stirling held the left, with some few left in his division of the Fifth of the Maryland line, whose heroic stand at Long Island had been the fairest episode of that disastrous day. Washington himself in the centre showed Charles Lee how to fight his game but ill-led troops of Maxwell's, Varnum's, Scott's, and Wayne's brigades. And Steuben, riding through their files as on a field-day, and "swidging" and swearing whenever he found a platoon out of alignment or a rear rank too close upon a front rank, wondered if his new friends of the New World could hold their men against his former comrades of the Old.

There in the parsonage orchard, where Dominic Woodhull's daughters were used in happier times to shake the red "snowballs" and brown russets from the trees, Mad Anthony, raving with delight of battle, was gathering a red harvest too, but gathering it by such dint of work as he had never known before, nor was to know thereafter, save at his wild escalade of Stony Point. Monckton's grenadiers came at him through the soft shaded grass beneath the apple-trees like a clock-work machine of murder. Once they had all but driven him out of his shady vantage ground. Then Knox's batteries, just unlimbered on Comb's Hill on his flank, came roaring to the rescue, and Robert saw the strangest sight of all his soldiering days, one whole platoon of British grenadiers dis-

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armed of their firelocks by a single round shot, so perfectly regular was their battle front. Back through the apple-trees came Wayne, and by the great barn in which Dominie Woodhull's daughters had but yesterday milked the dominie's cows, his front rank's muskets spoke. Then Robert saw the perfect red ranks falter and hesitate through the smoke, and, as it cleared, he saw the reason of its doubt, and why a fierce yell of triumph burst from the parched throats of Wayne's men. Monckton was down. His major was down. So was his senior captain. The too swift promotion of Mad Anthony's marksmen had staggered that splendid regiment.

There at the hedgerow, beyond which Robert had first seen the gliding ribbons of red, Clinton hurled charge after charge against Livingston's fresh troops and Varnum's rallied brigade. The narrow causeway at their backs crossed the morass through which they had first retired, and beneath it were certain grisly reminders that made them sell each step of ground they gave as dear as if they trod on golden nuggets, not blood-slippery Jersey sand. They were mud-choked semblances of what had been warm men and blithe comrades at reveille, lying stark beneath the arches of the causeway, whence they had been hurled in the wild panic of the morning's flight.

So far did Robert's fearless chief ride into that hell of carnage at the bridge head that the cornet

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could hear the snapping of bones as the grape and round shot tore through the thick close-ordered columns. He could hear the smothered cries of wounded men, who, trodden on by their fighting comrades, would not disorder the line of battle with their shrieks. He could see the faces of men hit, and read by their twitching lips where wounds are keenest, in breast or belly or groin or thigh. He saw one man, like Xenophon's Greek mercenary, thrust through and through, staggering out of the fight, holding his viscera in his hands.

The coppery midsummer sun glared through a haze of red dust on a red dance of death, and then :

"The rascals waver at the bridge head there, General Tarleton; put in your horse."

Back at Carr's house on the outskirts of Monmouth, Clinton, watching the fierce struggle through his glass, and wondering at first how the rebels stood so long in the open against the flower of Europe's infantry, had deemed the time fit to try the sabre. And from the square of Monmouth village it seemed as if some great hand had thrown a roll of red ribbon out into the fields which uncoiled as it flew, till stretching all across the eastern horizon was an undulating scarlet line. Then came the slow high note of a bugle, and then to the upper side of the ribbon of scarlet was seen a sheeny silver fringe, as the long sabres of the Queen's and Seventeenth Light Dragoons flashed upward for the charge. A wild cheer went up

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from the red footmen at the causeway as they saw the red horsemen sweeping to their succor. Oswald's hot guns from the heights behind the morass answered it as they plied the advancing lines in hopes to check it as they had checked the pursuers of Lee in the morning.

Through the battery smoke, drifting in upon and enveloping the staff, Robert, standing with mouth agape at the wonderful precision of the charge, saw his chief beckon with a commanding finger.

"Ride to General Lee," was the order, "and tell him to withdraw his men slowly across the causeway. He cannot bide their charge in the field, but our batteries may give some account of these gay gallants."

The cornet sped across the causeway through the ruck of slightly wounded men who were pouring back from the front. As he went, he felt the ground tremble under the plunging gallop of the advancing horse, and as he gave his message to the metamorphosed Lee, who was gallantly proving himself a liar in his morning's speech to Lafayette, he made out, with a hot heart-throb under his new jacket, the standard of the bloody Seventeenth.

Then his sane mind left him, and he only thought to strike one blow in remembrance of Roxborough and of his sweetheart's escort to the transport, if he never set eyes on his sacred charge again. Three leaps of his hunter would have cov-

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ered the ground between him and the charging line, as Colonel Ogden's Jersey regiment, under Lee's own eye, formed a square to receive cavalry, and cover the retreat across the bridge of the remainder of the two brigades.

Two leaps his hunter took a moment later, and McLane's Horse, in the person of one man, Cornet Robert Colladay, was hand-to-hand with the Seventeenth Light. But when his sane mind left him, a maniac cunning came instead, and charging through the press of horsemen (now disordered by the resistance of the square, and riding round it to seek a reach in the bristling hedge of bayonets), Robert's singleness of purpose saved his skin. In battle or elsewhere all men make way for a man with an object, and Robert's one object was Cathcart. He had seen him riding, cool, bold, and insolent, at the head of the First Troop; had seen him turn to encourage his men just before the great wave of mounted battle foamed up against the stout seawall of Jersey yeomen. At him he rode, cutting down one hulking Yorkshireman who stood in his way like a stalk of golden-rod, and hurling a sergeant from his saddle like a stone from a sling with a blow from the butt of his pistol. Then, as he met him face to face, and rose high in his short stirrups to deal a blow which would have changed the succession to one peerage, his vengeance slipped from his grasp, as Cathcart gave a choking yell and fell from his horse, with

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a bloody foam flecking his lips, shot through the lung from the centre of the square.

Robert glared one moment at the saddle where his foe had been—glared as an angry bull glares at the spot where a flying mortal should have been, according to his taurine calculations, to receive the impalement of his horns—then he gave vent to an inarticulate cry of rage, and rode straight at the first object he saw wearing a dragoon uniform and an officer's epaulet. The little cornet who wore them looked once at him, then turned and fled. Fled not back to the safety of the British lines, but, as if crazed with fright, sent his horse scudding like a frightened hare right across the Continental front. Robert stopped long enough to tighten his own belt and his horse's girth, to smile a grim smile, and then gave chase. He knew it was a wild agony of fear that guided his flying adversary. He resolved to make the chase a torture for him. On sped the light chestnut with the little officer bending almost to the saddle-bow, and ducking lower yet as he met the line of fire of each American regiment. After him thundered big Robert on his huge bay, with sword drawn, and fastidiously changing the direction of its point from time to time as he selected where to strike. Powder-grimed men leaned wonderingly on their firelocks and gazed, with cartridges half bitten through, at the wild chase. Down the long line clear to Stirling's stand on the comparatively

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unengaged left they swept, the big blue cornet holding his tantalizing sword above the bended back of the little red cornet, and smiling grimly all the time. Then back to the bridge head they came, whence now the square had retreated and the cavalry withdrawn under Oswald's plunging fire. There Robert Colladay thought to end the ghastly farce, and rising high in his stirrups he drove his point home for the spot where the cross belts meet. To spit the little chicken, he thought to himself, for roasting would be fine.

To his ringing ears there pierced a cry, shrill with a strange gasping reminder in it of a voice he had heard before, and then words came as the point touched the cross belts—words as familiar as the end of many a childish romp—“*Oh, Robert, stop, you hurt!*”

The long dragoon sabre fell clattering to the dusty earth. The big cornet sank his spurs once in his great bay's reeking sides, then stretched his mighty arm, and across the causeway, amid a roar of cheers and laughter from Ogden's heroes resting under the fire of the battery, the big cornet of McLane's galloped with the little cornet of the Seventeenth swung like a bag of meal across his saddle-bow.

Two troopers of his own command rode forward with cocked pistols as he dismounted with his prize.

“No quarter for that uniform!” they cried.

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"Stop, you fools!" shouted the captor cornet, as he laid the captive cornet gently on the grass. "It's a girl—my cousin."

V

Mistress Kitty Pryor, late cornet of his Majesty's Seventeenth Light Dragoons, slept that night with Sergeant Molly Pitcher, of Knox's Continental artillery. One Amazon had lost a commission and found a cousin on the field from which the beaten Clinton was stealing under cover of the darkness. The other had found a commission, or rather a warrant, and lost a husband whose gun she served, as history attests, through the later hours of that hot fight. Both wept—Mrs. Molly for her husband's death, and Mistress Kitty because her cousin would hardly speak to her, and was for going out into the field, or the British camp if necessary, to give Cathcart his *coup de grace* for his part in the escapade.

"I thought he knew me at the first," sobbed Kitty, "and wanted to k-k-k-ill me for running away in men's clothes. It was only a lark, and Captain C-c-c-athcart said it would be a mere canter to New York; and now he's dead I doubt not, and, oh, I wish that I was!"

"For the love of a murtherin' Sassenach captain?" said red-haired Molly, fiercely. "More shame t' ye! Faith, my mon's six-pounder is me husband now."

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"No, no!" protested weeping Mistress Kitty, with fire in her swollen eyes. "I hate him! hate him! hate him! For a fipenny I'd have shot him myself when I found how he'd lied to me! For he said—oh! oh! oh!—that he had d-d-despatches, and 'twould be but a day and part of a night's ride to New York; and—and—we were engaged, and would have been married before papa came with the admiral. It was *only* an elopement, at most; but Robert won't believe me, and he looked *so* fierce and handsome in his new uniform—blue and buff's prettier than red, anyway—and I'd marry that nasty old sword he stuck in my back, and I suppose he doesn't think I'm even worthy of that."

In the unedited MSS. of the Colladay and Pryor families, which were reunited after the peace, there is evidence, however, that Cornet Colladay came, by the light of another day, to look upon his cousin's misdoing as the foolish freak it really was of a girl who, for love of a lark, had only forestalled her parents' intentions in taking a short cut to New York and the altar—to only one of which destinations Cathcart, as it turned out, had intended to lead her. There is also evidence that General Washington's chaplain's services were called into requisition as soon as Cornet Colladay came to this conclusion. There is no documentary evidence in existence, but very little

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doubt in fact, that this conclusion was hastened by the knowledge that Sergeant Molly's duties as an artillerist, with eighty dollars gratuity, and half pay for life after the war, were too important to allow her to waste much time as the chaperon of an ex-British cornet.

Old Coaching Days



HERE had been a gay parade of rainbow-hued militia, chapeaued, plumed, tompioned, pipe-clayed, brass - epauletted, cross-belted, through the city all day; but at five o'clock in the October evening the Fast Mail coach for New York still held its own, as the nightly centre of attraction about the Post-office at Franklin Place and Chestnut Street.

One Night's
Run of the New
York and
Philadelphia
Flying Mail

Jacob, the guard, stowed the last piece of mail matter in the forward boot, pulled his vermilion coat up till its collar nearly touched the rim of his vermilion hat, and rapped himself smartly over his breast pockets to see if his bank packages were all right.

William Winner, the driver, likewise pulled up his vermilion coat to his vermilion hat, and spoke to his four sorrels, Sam and Trouble, George and Hiram, naming each distinctly and with a careful courtesy. The crowd cheered and followed the "Robert Burns" Fast Mail coach as it moved round into Third Street to take up its passengers for the night run to New York.

Although the year was 1830 and the militia had been celebrating the downfall of Charles X. (in that curious way which Americans had of celebrating all uprisings of the down-trodden French, Greek, or Irish before the steam vessel made them personally acquainted with the objects of their compassion), the foremost figure in the little knot of passengers, which stood in front of the—also vermilion—painted little stage office, looked as if it had slipped out of the court of Martha Washington. A straight, stiff, stern-faced old gentleman, he wore his hair powdered and *en queue*. His full-skirted, deep-pocketed coat was of black satin as was his waistcoat, whose long flaps reached half way to his knees. His smalls were of the same material and color, and his silk stockings continued the funereal tone of his personality to his silver-buckled shoes. His wrist-bands and cravat were of fine lace. For travel his grandeur was protected by a long roquelaure, now thrown back so as to only half conceal it, and a three-cornered hat of fine felt covered his powdered hair.

"Your coach is late—your coach is late, Mr. Reeside," he said jocularly, to an enormously tall high-featured Scotchman who stood by his side. "Which coach is it—the Robert Burns? Ah, Rabbie was an unreliable dog—unreliable, sir! What can you expect of a coach named after him?"

The crowd of idlers and even the other passen-

gers held their breaths as the powdered old aristocrat told the great James Reeside, master of five hundred horses and one thousand men, principal mail contractor with the Administration of His Excellency, President Jackson, who had reduced in three years the time of transit between Philadelphia and New York from twenty-one hours to twelve, that his coach was late.

The giant Scotchman only laughed, however. "You are safe in saying that to me, Mr. Conaway," he replied, "but I fancy you daring to say it to one of my drivers or guards."

The old gentleman was about to reply when a ringletted damsel at his side, with arch eyes showing under a tremendous feathered bonnet said: "Now, papa, you will make one of Mr. Reeside's coaches late, and that never was done before."

The young lady sprang laughingly into the coach, and her companion, who had been bestowing his attention upon the fifty pounds per capita allowance of baggage in the rear boot of the coach, waited for her father to climb into the vehicle.

Young Mr. Van Name, the New Yorker, who was about to accompany the old Philadelphian and his daughter on their journey, was something of an exquisite according to the fashion of the time; and the time was that of "Pelham," of Count d'Orsay, and of "Young Disraeli's man-millinery glories."

He had found quieter models in his European

travel, however, than these dandies, and his waist-coat, though of colored velvet, was of a mild pattern, as was his satin scarf. The color of his tight-waisted coat vied with that of his shirt in aspiration toward the neighborhood of his ambrosial curls and almost conical beaver hat. His tight trousers were carefully strapped to his well-shod feet, and he carried a many-caped great-coat on his arm.

There were two seats in the vehicle, each accommodating three persons, and in quartering the party there was room for all the tact and strategy of which Van Name was capable. He had come to Philadelphia for no other real purpose than the delight of sitting by Cecelia Conaway's side throughout the starry stillness of this October night, and he had no intention of passing it by the side of her father. It would certainly be etiquette for Cecelia to occupy one corner and her father to sit by her side. This, however, would deprive the old gentleman of the comfort of a corner for himself. On the other hand, it would not do for Van Name to separate father and daughter, nor would it be chivalrous to have the young woman sitting bolt upright all night between two cozy nodding gentlemen.

Van Name's ingenuity conquered with the proffer of his place on the back seat to a bilious-looking old lady who he knew was in mortal dread of riding with her back to the horses. Thus he was

face to face with the young lady of the arch glances and feathered bonnet.

The coach had started by the time its six occupants were fairly seated. Mr. Conaway bowed courteously to Mr. Reeside, to which salute the gaunt Scotchman waved one of his great hands. They were off. Not with a bound, for the American coach horses of the palmy days never wasted time and energy in caracles and curvets, but at a swift trotting pace which carried them up to the corner of Third and Arch before they had time to realize their departure.

"That's the place," said Mr. Conaway to Van Name, pointing to a huge staple sunk in the curbstone on the corner where stood a church, "where those bigots of the Second Presbyterian Church tried to stop the Mail last Sunday with a chain. They didn't stop Reeside; excellent fellow, Reeside; knows his place; never presumes on me because of my little jocosities—eh! Cecelia?"

As Mr. Reeside was a personal friend of both Clay and Jackson, and had put his hand in his own pocket, contrary to the customs of modern mail contractors, to lift the struggling young Post-office Department on its feet, he might not have considered himself an object of Mr. Conaway's condescension; but the old gentleman was a relic of the Federalist autocracy and condescended to nearly every one.

They were by this time outside of the city limits

which then were at Vine Street, and coachman Winner was steering his four with marvellous dexterity among the wagons of the home-going farmers which came pouring out of all the inn-yards of the Black Horse, Eagle, Bald Eagle, Pennsylvania, Farmers', and other taverns of the time, with a rapidity which made the narrow street a place of danger for an equipage which had a contract time of ten miles an hour to make.

The Bucks and Montgomery County yeomen had been in town to see the militia parade, and were returning to their farms in a condition—many of them—which showed that the field of Pennsylvania was ripe for the labor of T. S. Arthur, who was soon to bring the gospel of milk and water to his benighted townsmen.

Some of them cheered the Mail Coach and some cursed it as it whizzed past, but none, thanks to Winner's skill, even grazed it, and in a few moments the coach was out of the Northern Liberties by way of Brown Street to Front, and was rolling between the little houses—from almost every one of which came the jar and rattle of a hand-loom—of the English (by name and nature) District of Kensington.

"You see," said chirpy Mr. Conaway, as they passed row after row of houses, from each of which a weaver thrust his head to watch—the one diversion of his day—the passage of the Mail; "you see, or rather hear, that we are making our own

carpets." Did you notice before you got into it that you were to journey in an American-made coach? Now, tell me, Van Name, do you think the English make as good coaches as these?"

The young New Yorker, in duty bound, inspected the interior of the vehicle, and as far as the craning of his neck would permit, its outside.

It was not so heavy as the mountainous English mail coaches, and there was no place for outside passengers. Instead of their seats was a place with a canvas-top cover for small articles, surrounded by a light railing. The color of the vehicle, like the livery of the guard and coachman, was of bright vermilion, made a more dazzling red by the contrast of the silver-plated hub bands, door handles, and the metal work of the driver's seat and lamps. The upholstery inside was of red morocco, and on the panel of the door bloomed a big Scotch thistle under the name "Robert Burns." In smaller letters Charles Veazie, of Troy, announced himself as the maker of the coach. James Reeside's proprietorship was made known only by the presence of a modest silver R on the bridles.

"The vehicle is certainly neater and lighter than the English coaches," said Van Name, after he had finished his inspection; "and yet it seems rather like a carriage than a mail coach. That is only because one is accustomed to the other style, I suppose."

"Gad!" chuckled the old gentleman, "it's carriage enough for me. Before Reeside took this route I used always to travel in my own carriage, but gad, sir! I cannot afford the horses that he has. There are six changes on this road—twenty-four horses, mind you—and every one of 'em's blooded; 'Messenger' or 'Eclipse' stock, most of them. When they can't keep the pace, off they go to a slow route. Great fellow that Reeside. He'll keep ahead of this railroad notion."

Van Name ventured to demur. "I saw the experiment with Stephenson's engine on the Manchester and Liverpool coaches two years ago," he said. "It seemed successful. They think abroad that it will do away with horse power."

"Very likely, very likely, in England," said Mr. Conaway oracularly. "Short distances, easy grades. Why I, myself, proposed to take stock in this Germantown and Norristown road that they're pushing. But for long routes and bad ground, never. Why look at the failure of the proposed road to Columbia—an engineering impossibility, sir, an engineering impossibility—so declared on the highest authority. And our good citizens were fighting over the place of termination of a road that couldn't be built."

"There would seem to be little difficulty in building a railroad here," said Van Name.

The coach was gliding over the smooth plain between Kensington and Frankford, and in a few

moments was clattering through the main street of a pretty village which had then, and has to-day, more of a village air than any of Philadelphia's suburbs. The sun was beginning to hasten his downward steps as the Mail dashed on to Holmesburg, and the laborers and truck-farmers who came to the doors of their cottages, smoked generally the pipe of contentment after an early supper.

William Winner and his sorrels left the coach at twilight and Holmesburg, and Jerry Carpenter tooled it with four kittenish grays for Bristol, past Andalusia, the scene of the Mifflin Chapman tragedy, and now, with its neighbor, Torresdale, the early summer and autumn home of the millionaires whose winters are spent in their town, and mid-summer in their seashore houses.

A thousand echoes of the sixteen hoofs made Cecelia close her ears as they rattled through the old covered bridge over Neshaminy Creek, and the bugle rang out for the triumphant entry into sleeping Bristol. It was after sunset, and the lamps were lighted, but they could still see enough of the quiet beauty of this portion of the Delaware to enjoy it.

"I never see the green bank of Burlington over there," said Cecelia, "with the river between it and the little wharf here, but I think of heaven."

"Gad!" said her father, waking suddenly from a doze, "is that why you want to take a house here, sis? Want to make an easy translation for

your old dad when he has to go, pretty soon, eh? Very considerate, upon my life—very considerate.”

“It is like heaven, though, after the noise and dust and ugliness of town,” said Cecelia, as the coach stopped to change horses, looking out over the blue water and listening to the slow stroke of a church bell calling some little Jersey flock to mid-week prayer.

“They have no militia parading here, in any event,” said Van Name. “It’s heavenly in that respect—eh—Mr. Conaway?”

“Emilie Chapron gave the Fencibles a lovely banner with a portrait of Lafayette painted on it,” Cecelia interjected.

Mr. Conaway snorted: “Yes, indeed; yes, indeed, Van Name. Upon my word, I have no patience with those people. General Cadwalader fifing and drumming through the streets all day in honor of the downfall of the French Monarchy; a monarchy, begad! to which this country owes its existence.

“A very jolly fellow was the king, too—a very jolly fellow. I met him, when he was the Count d’Artois, at his poor brother’s court, when I was there—heaven forgive me! with Mr. Jefferson forty-odd years ago, and they’ve put young Égalité in his place—young Égalité—of that traitorous breed of Orleans who’ve been scheming for the throne this hundred years—ever since the Regency.”

The other three passengers looked surprised at this outburst of ultra-royalism, and Cecelia signalled to Van Name not to encourage it; but it was too late.

The young man had said, "You don't seem to be over-fond of your old chief, Mr. Conaway," and the old gentleman broke out again. "Fond of him? Fond of Jefferson? Sir, he sent the country to the devil. Do you know why I have never changed the fashion of my clothing since the General's time? No? Because the fashions after that time were set by a pack of murderers; Mr. Jefferson's friends, sir, of the Directoire. A pretty set of truly Merveilleux they were. But he saved my skin, I've no doubt. He got leave of absence when he saw trouble brewing in '89. If I had stayed, I'd have said or done something to bring me to the guillotine. He always got out of the way when there was trouble. I don't know that *sans-culottes* would have made any trouble for him, though—they'd have liked him. They asked for Gouveneur Morris's recall because he was too much of a gentleman."

"Pray, Mr. Van Name," said Cecelia, breaking in upon the tirade, "can you tell me at what time we are due in Trenton? I must confess that I am monstrous hungry."

By the aid of a somewhat ponderous pocket arrangement of felt, steel, and lamp-wick, Van Name produced a light and found a large red printed

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placard which hung framed at the side of the coach and read :

INSTRUCTIONS to the GUARDS and DRIVERS of the Fast Mail running between Philadelphia and New York.

Time allowed for driving each route, as follows :

	Miles.	Hours.	Minutes.
Philadelphia to Holmesburg.....	10	1	15
Holmesburg to Trenton.....	21	2	30
Trenton to Ayres.....	21	2	30
Ayres to New Brunswick.....	6	..	40
New Brunswick to Newark.....	23	3	
Newark to Jersey City.....	9	1	
Returning from New York the same time allowed.			
Allowance for supper.....			15

"We should be due there at a quarter to nine, Miss Conaway," the New Yorker answered, and silence fell upon the coach.

Mr. Conaway wrapped himself up in his coat. Cecelia pulled up her tippet, and nothing broke the stillness but the regular smiting of the grays' hoofs upon the hard turnpike, the jingle of their bits, the rumbling of the wheels, and the occasional crackle of a dry branch which had fallen in the road as the coach swept over it.

The lamp-lights shone into the trees on each side of the road and showed where the early frost had already touched and painted the maples into a thousand tints of red which seemed like a reflec-

tion of the hue of the swift-running coach and its scarlet guard and driver.

Then the hoof-beats gave a slower, hollower sound, and the Fast Mail began its journey over the long wooden Morrisville bridge across the Delaware, and presently was on Jersey soil and in Trenton town.

Lights shone brightly from the front of Mrs. Wilde's tavern in the Jersey capital. The cramped passengers bundled out of the vehicle and were welcomed by the bustling hostess, who had spread for them a supper, each item of which would have furnished one of the hasty meals which are snatched at a modern railway station. There were fried chicken, waffles, buckwheat cakes and Jersey sausage, coffee, and Mr. Conaway concluded his repast with a toss of apple brandy of the true Jersey-lightning variety, "every drop of which was warranted to burn a hole through a silver dollar." Then, his old blood warmed with the food and drink, he stumped out to watch the harnessing of the new team.

"And you are going abroad, Miss Conaway?" sighed Van Name, when they were alone.

"Yes; but, mercy me, don't say it as if it was 'You are going to-o-o d-i-e, Miss Conawa-a-y.'"

"You are light-hearted," said the young man. "If I were going I would be too."

"Well, well," said Miss Conaway briskly, "I suppose the packet captain can give you a berth."

"You play the Tantalus, Miss Conaway," said Van Name dejectedly. "My holiday ended last year. My father would scarcely spare me to make this little trip."

"What was the purpose of your little trip?" said Cecelia archly, pausing with her napkin on her hand.

"Ah, Miss Conaway," Van Name began eagerly.

"Come, come, young people," said the old gentleman, putting his head in the door, "the coach is waiting."

If Cecelia had feared a renewal of the conversation which she had handled so coquettishly, the new team relieved her of embarrassment. They had been dancing and fretting at their bits; and the moment the passengers were placed and Caleb Blake, their driver, had swung himself into his seat, they were off with a whirl through Trenton streets. The like had never been seen there since Washington sent the Hessians dancing before him on a December morning fifty-four years before. The lights of the inn were swallowed up in an instant, and the bouncing of the coach on its high springs through the dark made guard Jacob Shipman cling to his seat with one hand and thump his breast pockets vigorously with the other to make doubly sure that his bank packages were not jounced out. At the outskirts of the town the dash of a rabbit across the road increased the animals' speed, and the rate at which they raced for

Princeton through the country was like steeple-chasing.

"They are running away! They are running away!" gasped Cecelia.

"They are only feeling their oats, my dear," said her father reassuringly.

"I hope that is all," said the young lady, but she freed her arm from her cloak and put one hand through one of the dangling straps which had been rapping sharply against the steel ribs of the coach cover as the vehicle bounded along.

"Oh!"

There were plenty of straps in the well-appointed coach. It was strange that Cecelia and Van Name had grasped the same one.

It was not a very loud "Oh!" that Cecelia gave, when she made the discovery that another hand had in the dark reached the strap before her, and she did not seek to withdraw from the leather loop, albeit it was somewhat crowded. Van Name set his teeth and kept his hand there. He would rather have faced the mob that had just torn down the French monarchy than have risked his nascent suit by presuming upon Cecelia's fright; but with the feeling of a desperate gambler, he resolved to let his hand stay in the loop and see what came of it when her excitement cooled. So he let it remain, not daring to move a muscle lest he should be thought to take a cowardly advantage of Miss Conaway's fright. The motion of the coach grad-

ually slackened. The seventeen-hand thoroughbreds, Nell and Major, The Boy and Henry, were through with their fun and resigned themselves, after their gallop, to the sober guidance of Caleb Blake. Yet the little hand did not steal out of the loop until the lights of Princeton were almost in sight.

As they shone in the coach window, Van Name looked eagerly at Cecelia's face. It wore a rosy blush, and there was just the suspicion of a reproachful smile.

The Mail flashed past the front of old Nassau Hall, drew up at Thompson's Tavern, Princeton, and it was off again behind a cross-matched team of tall, raw-boned horses of Alleghany Mountain breed, picked for work over the heaviest and hilliest part of the road.

Half way between Philadelphia and Ayres the clatter of an approaching equipage is heard—a sort of echo of the noise of the Mail.

"All right!" sings out the guard, Hickman, from his perch overhead. "All right!" comes the echo out of the darkness, and in a moment more the lamps of the Mail from New York shine full in the passengers' faces. The next moment it is gone like a red streak in the darkness to the south.

"We must be half way there," said Cecelia, with a little yawn. "Pray, Mr. Van Name, when they introduce the railway coaches you talk about, will we be able to walk about in them?"

"Hardly," said Van Name, with a smile of superior knowledge, not having the eye of the prophet wherewith to see "the vestibuled limited" of sixty years after. "The compartments of the English railway coaches are scarcely larger than this, but then the motion is so smooth that one can stand up for a change without danger."

"That, at least, would be a relief," said Cecelia. "Now if I should stand up here, I should undoubtedly fall out of the door, or over papa and wake him up, or——"

"You might secure yourself by one of the straps," said Van Name daringly.

"Not if a fellow-passenger had pre-empted them," replied Cecelia. "Now if you went to sea with us, Mr. Van Name, and the vessel was wrecked, and there was only one plank to save me, would I find, when I reached it, that you had got there before me, and wouldn't let go?"

"My dear Miss Conaway," said Van Name eagerly, "if that unfortunate case should come I should have only one regret in letting go, and that would be at the loss of the sight of your face."

"As you are not going with us," said Cecelia dryly, "your gallantry will not be put to the test; but that is a very pretty compliment, Sir Flatterer. Is it of French make or English, pray?"

"It is of the make of the heart," said Van Name; but the bugle ringing for Ayres waked the sleeping passengers and put a stop to the drift

of the conversation, which Van Name thought to himself as he sat back in his seat again, he was directing with considerable skill.

He did not renew the conversation during the next stage, which he knew was of only six miles, but sat and meditated on his future plan of campaign while "old Roany"—as Eben Stoddard, the new driver, was called, on account of his iron-gray hair—piloted the Mail to New Brunswick.

That town was passed at midnight, and Jacob Whipple took the reins for the long twenty-three-mile stage to Newark.

"I began to tell you at supper," said Van Name, "why I came to Philadelphia."

"Oh!" said Cecelia, "I thought you had finished telling me; but no, 'pon my word, I can't remember why it was, so I suppose you didn't tell me."

"I think you know," said Van Name, with a tragic seriousness, which was rather marred by a fine crescendo snore from the bilious old woman to whom he had given his seat.

Cecelia took hold of the strap, rested her head on her arm, so that the moonlight shone full on her arch face through the coach window, and with a trace of mimicry of his seriousness replied, "Really, I do not."

"I came for the sole purpose of accompanying you," said Van Name, throwing a vast amount of import into his voice.

"Papa and I?" queried the young lady, innocently.

"No, you," said Van Name, with impatient emphasis.

"Well, you took a queer way of showing it," murmured Cecelia, with a reproachful glance at the strap.

A swift intuition flashed athwart Van Name's brain, and as the lights of Rahway shone into the coach window, he made fast prisoner of the little hand within the loop, then gently disengaged it from the envious morocco and pressed it to his lips.

"That is what I ought to have done two hours ago," he said with conviction, as he fondled the little fist with both his own and mumbled kisses on it.

"No-o-o," said Cecelia doubtfully, attempting to withdraw the pink and white prize, "not quite that much, but you might have——"

"Squeezed it!" said Van Name emphatically, and then Cecelia gave a little cry, for before he suited the action to the word, he had slipped a large intaglio, which he wore, on the third finger of her left hand. He "made it well" in the manner described in a well-known nursery rhyme.

"Single at New Brunswick, engaged at Newark; would that it might be married at Jersey City," Van Name thought, as the Mail swept through the frosty dawn on the last stage of this most eventful journey. He wanted to shout his happiness to

George Washington, the leader of the gray team which hurried them over the last miles of their route. He would have liked to surprise Asa Thomas, the driver, with it, as he sat with reddening nose in the crisp air of the morning on the box. He would have liked to proclaim it through the guard's horn to the fishes of the fresh rippling Hackensack. He would have liked to wake up *beau père* Conaway and ask his consent at once. A little exclamation of delight from Cecelia withdrew him from his silent rapture. She was looking from the window. The space was crowded, but with some damage to her bonnet, his head was framed with hers in a red leather background.

They had reached the summit of Bergen Hill, and New York was before them. Not the New York of to-day, with the sands of its desert of men covering every foot of Manhattan Island, with the noble profile of that island obscured by ungainly wharves and the iron bulks of hundreds of foreign vessels.

It was a snug little town reaching not half way up the narrow island, and ending in a greenery of market gardens about where Grace Church now stands.

Above were farms and orchards and the crowned hills, and below, a forest of thirteen-story buildings did not obscure the graceful outlines of the new City Hall. Dozens of trim packets were moored in the stream, each flying the American flag, and

one, Van Name thought to himself with a pang, was to bear Cecelia from him on the morrow.

The passengers all waked with the sunrise gun from Fort Hamilton; and Cecelia, with coquetry all gone, sat with happy face beside her father and spoke only, but eloquently, with her eyes, as in the first, fresh sunlight of the autumn day the coach rode into Jersey City.

Joseph Dodd, now well on with his fifty-four years of faithful service of the Post-office Department, is waiting with his rowboat at the ferry to take the mail across to the foot of Cortlandt Street, and thence to the Post-office in Garden Street. Gerard Shipman goes with him to the State office at Thomas Whitfield's, No. 1 Cortlandt Street, second door from Broadway, and next door to the celebrated pump of good water. He does not mark on his way bill that, contrary to all regulations, the Fast Mail had stopped midway in its course, and taken up a way passenger, one Dan Cupid.

"I never saw you wear that ring before, Cecelia," says Mr. Conaway, as he blinks his eyes and yawns, while they wait for the ferry. "What, you sly puss——"

"Hush, papa!" said Cecelia, growing rosy, "Mr. Van Name will come and tell you all about it at the Duyckinks' this afternoon. We are staying at the Duyckink, Walter—Mr. Van Name, I mean—on Bowling Green."

The Mad Poet's Quest



It was the wind of Christmas eve that rattled the loose bricks in the

What He
Sought and
Saw on a
Christmas Eve

top of the chimney of the Café Vingt-Vins till one of them fell down into the fireplace, and roused the Mad Poet from his doze. Since that time he had chattered incessantly, and Victor, his landlord, thought, as he leaned over the bar and soaked his bread in the *ordinaire* before he ate it, that the Mad Poet's chatter was more eerie than the Noel wind in the chimney, or the loneliness of the café on a Sunday night. For Christmas Eve came on a Sunday that year, and the Mad Poet and Victor were alone in the bar of the café, save when Clementine, the fat maid of all work, came through to get coal for a lodger or more brandy for the old major, who had been put to bed at nine o'clock, and would not go to sleep without it.

The Mad Poet, after the brick fell down the chimney, talked rapidly and wildly, save when his cough checked his breath for brief spaces, and after each of these he hurried quickly forward to make up. When the pain caught him in his

breast, he put his hand over it, and told Victor that he wished to heaven that he knew whether it was in his heart or his lungs. For if it was in his lungs, he would not care, as it would give him a week to die in anyway. But if it was his heart, it might wind him up in a minute, and he should not have a chance to drink a health to Christmas when the actors who lodged in the house came home from the rehearsal of the new piece for tomorrow's matinée. For *viveur* he was born, and *viveur* he would die; which was a strange paradox, he thought, and so he had dragged himself out of bed to have a Christmas rouse with the actors. Then he coughed again, and putting his handkerchief to his mouth, looked at the red spots which appeared on it, and told Victor that there was no cause for alarm—it was only his lungs where the pain had been, and there was so little of the lungs left that there would be no place for pain there soon. Then he laughed, and said it was droll, droll indeed, that a man should have such an embarrassment of riches in the matter of things to die of. It was a race, he said, between the fever which had kept him in bed for a week, and the infernal manner in which his cardiac system struck work every now and then, and the disease which was bleeding his lungs away, as to which would carry him off first. He wished them a fair field and no favor, and he would be hanged if he cared which won.

The Mad Poet's eyes blazed while he chattered. His dry skin seemed to be stretched over his high thin nose and broad forehead like sheepskin drawn over a drum-head. He constantly tried to moisten his dry lips with an equally dry tongue, and his voice was that half falsetto of the far-advanced consumptive. Victor felt a creepy sensation as the mad wind in the chimney echoed the Mad Poet's laughter. Clementine cried and crossed herself, hearing him as she came to the bar for the major's second brandy.

"Eh, eh?" cried the Mad Poet, turning in his chair, having caught sight of the girl in the dim mirror above the battered black marble chimney-piece. "What ails thee, Clementine?" he called in French.

"Ah, m'sieu'! you tock so, and you are so seeck, and you may 'ave ze crezee again," she answered in broken English, alluding in her last speech to the delirium of the Mad Poet which had frightened her so on the day before.

"*Tais toi*," said the phlegmatic Victor, setting the major's brandy on the girl's tray. "Hurry off. Already I hear the old beast shout. He will be down."

Clementine vanished up the stairway from the basement bar, wiping her eyes.

The Mad Poet nursed his knees. "Shall I keep New-Year's, Victor?" he asked at length.

"If m'sieu' would but go to bed," replied his host, evasively.

"At least I shall not keep another Christmas," continued the Mad Poet.

"All men keep Christmas, m'sieu'. Some keep it with the Christ," replied Victor, meditatively soaking another crust in the *ordinaire*.

The landlord of the Café Vingt-Vins, though his place was not of the best repute even in the shady foreign quarter of the city, had been bred a Roman Catholic, and retained from his childhood this phrase, in which he had heard his Breton people speak at Christmas of those who had died during the year. And his lodger was as good as dead.

The Mad Poet was silent. He had heard the phrase before in his wanderings abroad through his wild youth. He had never taken it home to himself. Only the rhythm of it had struck his ear, which all men who knew his work, even the poets who lived in bowers of bric-à-brac and wrote "kid things," said was the most delicately true of all the minor singers of his time. It was one of these who deeming him an absurd but interesting survival from the era of Pfaff's, had dubbed him Mad Poet. And he should keep next Christmas there—or elsewhere, he thought. The Mad Poet loved old forms and phrases too much to have ever had his faith in them much shaken by the sterile unbelief of modern physics. And what had Christmas been to him for years? A time of revel wilder than all other times; that was all. He felt the fever burning higher in his temples as

he sat silent before the fire. Victor had gone upstairs, and, stepping over to the water-pitcher, he poured ice-water on his blood-spotted handkerchief and wrapped it around his head. All sights were dim and blurred in his eyes as he crossed the room back to his chair. There was a corpse-hued blue haze about the flickering gas-jets of the fly-specked chandelier, and the three shrouded billiard tables back in the darkness at the end of the long room took the shape of huge biers. The ticking of the clock grew louder in his ears, and took on a threatening sound. The mad wind in the chimney howled farther down its throat. It seemed to want but little more audacity to come in and clasp him in the room.

The Mad Poet knew the mood, he thought. He reached mechanically toward the table, patterned with muddy rings from the sloppings of absinthe and water glasses. There was no pen there, he saw. If there had been, what was there to write? Nothing. Yet he knew that shortly he should see. He felt the clarity of vision coming on. What should be the object on which his glance should fall?

* * * * *

It was a little boy running along a broad street. The child was befurred and tippeted, for there was snow on the pavement, which muffled the clatter of the carriage wheels rolling along between the grand brown-stone-fronted houses. The little boy

had red cheeks and shining eyes, and his tight-fitting little overcoat bulged out at the side with some treasure, of which the mittened little hands now and then ascertained the safety with cautious fumbles.

The Mad Poet's cough caught his breath again for a moment. He lost sight of the child. He looked up. The corpse-blue haze about the lights seemed to fill the room. He closed his eyes. Again he felt the prescience.

The child was in a meaner street when he next saw him. He ran, slapping his tiny hands for warmth against his little chest, up a high stoop in the mean street, and standing on the tiptoes of his little overshoes, pulled with all his small might at the highest of three bell-knobs. The door opened. A woman's face appeared at it. It was arch and sweet, and looked down with an amused smile of pride and love at the red-cheeked, eager little man on the threshold. A small glad voice piped, "My pretty mother!" and the little figure disappeared through the doorway with the arch sweet face bending down to the red little cheeks.

"I was let to dinner last night," the same glad voice piped again, "and I have brought you an orange from dessert." It was in a room now, a room which seemed more strangely bare for the litter of bright dresses strewn about the chairs and bed. "Grandma says I must not go to the theatre with you this afternoon, but after you are through

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there you may take me out to see the Christmas Eve, and I must be home by eight." There were tears and smiles at once upon the arch sweet face. It bent again to the red little cheeks, and the small voice was wondering and sorrowful when it said, "My pretty mother, what makes you cry?"

* * * * *

The corpse-blue haze had vanished when the Mad Poet opened his eyes, but all was so far, far off. It was like looking at things through an inverted glass, and every moment the glass grew smaller. It was strange how distinct the ticking of the clock was when it was so faint. It must be a mile away. The Mad Poet rose.

* * * * *

Patrolman Mullany of the Charles-Street station stopped, a huge white snow-clad shape, at the door of the Café Vingt-Vins. He revolved in his mind the question of tapping at the door. The thought deterred him that perhaps he had had drink enough. Then the door concerning which he cogitated flew suddenly open. A stout girl with flaxen braids down her back rushed out into the storm, and clasped the skirts of Patrolman Mullany's snowy great-coat.

"Oh, M'sieu' Mulannie! 'ave you see M'sieu' Ralph? 'E 'ave ronned away," wept Clementine.

"Oh, I see him," replied the policeman, scornfully, "jist as I've seed him before often enough,

runnin' down the street toward University Place without seein' anybody at all. He's wild drunk."

"*Ah ciel!*"—the girl wrung her hands in the driving snow which clustered in frosty diamonds on her flaxen hair—"he not dronk! he seeck! he crezee! Ah, pursue him, M'sieu' Mulannie!"

"It's 'most midnight," replied the policeman. "I'll turn in a general alarm when I go off at twelve. They know his description well enough at the station-house." He laughed at his joke, and tramped on through the snow.

Yes, it was nearly midnight. Metropolitan Christmas Eve festivities, retarded somewhat by the falling of the day on a Sunday, were beginning to be observed. Cabs with noisy occupants had been flitting through Clinton Place for half an hour. Foot-passengers were more frequent and more mirthful than they had been. As the girl turned toward the path of light which the open doorway cast on the snow, five wild shapes came dancing and singing, arm in arm, along the sidewalk. The girl knew them for customers of the café who had some acquaintance with Ralph Wolsey. There was the red-headed law clerk, the blue-eyed young bucket-shop gambler, the two noisy students from the Physicians and Surgeons, and the dark thin fellow who painted plaques. They all lived around the corner in Neilson Place, and as they danced along the snow, being incited to saltation by the observance of certain Christmas

Eve rites in the law clerk's room, they sang the wild music of a song which was in great vogue that Christmas-time—the farandole of Audran. Clementine thought, as they danced past her, of asking them to search for Ralph. But Victor called angrily to her from the bar. He had trouble enough with the lodger in the house, without running after him into the snow. Clementine was wanted, for customers would soon be arriving at the bar. Christmas was coming in.

* * * * *

“Little West Twelfth—Little West Twelfth,” said the man to himself who ran westward in the storm. He would keep straight on through Clinton Place and Greenwich Avenue, for he knew the house was somewhere adjacent to the latter. He had never come this way before. He did not know how he had got so far down-town. He must have lost himself in the lights of Madison Square, and kept straight on down Broadway, instead of turning west on Twenty-third Street. He had never been out so late alone before, and, oh, what would his grandmother say when she knew he had slipped away to see his mother, who was an actress, and sang in those new French plays they called *bouffes*, and whose husband, her son, had died after he had made his *mésalliance*—from shame, the grandmother always said. But he wanted to hear her sing in the church. They had promised him that a year ago, when they would

not let him go to hear her in the wonderful service which was always held in the great church of St. Aloysius just at midnight Christmas eve. It was late, and he had lost so much time by taking the wrong road, as he must have done, confused by the lights of the great square. Still he must be in time to go with her. So he ran along the pavements, the swinging signs over the shabby shops, which had once been palaces of merchant princes, groaning in the wind above him, like gallows chains, he thought, shuddering, in the stories he had had read to him. He must be in time, he thought, and, oh no, he was not cold. He thought he had never been so warm before. He looked at all the corner street lamps as he ran along. He was glad he could read so plainly now, else he might not have been able to find his way. "My pretty mother," he said to himself, with a smile. "She will be frightened when I come." At last, looking up through the drifting snow, he saw the gold and black letters, "Little West Twelfth." His heart leaped. Oh, if he was in time! He gained the high stoop. Somehow it was changed. It puzzled him a little. The railing had not been broken that he remembered. And the bell knobs! One was missing—the lowest one—and another dangled by its wire. The third one was intact, and he was glad.

A window went up with a bang in answer to two impatient peals.

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"Oh, Mrs. Flynn!" he began eagerly, "where is my mother? Has my mother gone to church yet? Please tell me quick, Mrs. Flynn."

The window went down again with another bang and a muttered reference to the police and holiday drunkards.

The figure on the stoop trembled, and burst out sobbingly: "Oh, I wish she'd tell me! I wish she wouldn't be so cross! Oh, my pretty mother, she must have gone!"

Far in the east arose a wild joyous clangor of bells that floated weirdly on the wind into the snowy street.

The figure ran down the steps, crying, "Oh dear! oh dear! those must be the chimes she said they rang when Christmas came, and it's clear to Fortieth Street, and I couldn't ask grandma for any money."

The wild apparition of a man with burning eyes and strained, pallid face startled the late passenger under the street light at the corner an instant afterward. Again the chimes of Grace tossed out their clamorous midnight salute to the day of the Nativity. Christmas was coming in.

The midnight service was well on in St. Aloysius, the great temple of ritualism, which stood over against the abandoned reservoir in Fortieth Street. Long since the long processional had passed, chanting, up the aisle, with the gaunt-

faced ascetic rector at its head in gorgeous vestment, followed by the trailing column of priests, deacons, and choristers, their hands all folded prayerwise over their robes of white and red. The lights blazed now upon the chancel thronged with the celebrants, and the church crowded with worshippers and sight-seers to the Gothic doors. There was a heavy scent of incense in the air. The last wreaths of it hung in the vaulted roof. The great coronal over the altar, the sacred candles upon it, and the long rows of lights down the pillared aisles fell on stained windows and illuminated roof, and kindled awful lights among the rich purples and crimsons of ecclesiastic coloring.

In the hidden recess beside the chancel a trumpet blew, and a thousand kneeling men and women rose from the stone floor as one. There was a little commotion in the crowd near one of the side doors. A velvet-caped verger with a long staff stepped that way. There was quiet again, for the man who had caused the disturbance by pushing through the throng had gained his point of reaching the front, and the anthem began. People looked askance at the man, for his face was rigidly set. There was a flush in his cheeks not born of the cold outside. His eyes stared fixedly at the recess beside the chancel, and they seemed like ice with fire behind them.

"O come, all ye faithful!" choired the basses, and the little alto boys in their high sweet trebles

piped, "Joyful and triumphant," and the organ thundered and the trumpet called above the blended current of sound, "O come ye to Bethlehem!"

But he who stood in the front of the crowd at the side door hardly heard them. His hot eyes were fixed on the recess beside the chancel, where the women singers stood he knew—for women were not allowed in the chancel of St. Aloysius—and with feverish breath he waited while the anthem swept along its mighty way.

Clear above all sounds at last it rose—bird-like in its soaring, bird-like in its winged rest on the very crest of the tossing waves of melody, dipped in the spray of sound sometimes, but always clear of the sea. "Yea, Lord, we greet Thee," sang the high soprano, and then from the front of the crowd at the side door came a wild, sobbing voice, "Oh, that isn't my mother!"

Onward the anthem swept. "O come, let us adore Him!" choired the basses, and the tenors and the child trebles answered, "O come, let us adore Him!"

Meantime the man who had stood in the front of the crowd was being led out by the velvet-caped verger with the staff. He made no resistance, but followed trembling, and choking back his sobs. He did not speak, but at the door he burst out: "I must go back. I wonder where she is?"

And behind him in the great blazing church the

bassos shouted forth again, "O come, let us adore Him!" And the wailing tenors, the childish trebles, and the threatening trumpet, the thundering organ, and the bird-like soprano over it all, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"

* * * * *

It was the midnight noon of Sixth Avenue when the man who had startled the worshippers of St. Aloysius turned into it. Myriads of electric lights on the snow made it as bright as day. Overhead crashed the aerial trains on their high tracks. The bells jingled beneath them of horses drawing the slow street cars, heavy with loads of noisy passengers. Carriages rattled to and fro, from bar to café, from café to music hall. Thousands strolled the street, singing, larking, shouting "Merry Christmas!" to one and all. Through them ran the man from St. Aloysius. His mind was numb. He had no thoughts. He had one feeling only—of heart-break. He could not find her. Her face grew dim in his mind's eye as he slackened his pace at Thirtieth Street.

A coupé stopped at the lighted door of a restaurant as he halted on the corner. A woman stepped out. The otter hem of her sealskin cloak touched the snow. Her eyes and cheeks were alight and aglow with holiday spirit. A gray-moustached old man followed her, and she bore a blinking Skye terrier in her arms.

"O, Ralph, Ralph," she cried, catching sight

of the man on the corner, "see my Christmas! See what the commodore gave me!" She held the sleepy Skye between her slender hands, gloved in long gauntletted gloves, up to the gaze of the man who had been turned out of St. Aloysius. The dog began to bark. A look of distrustful wonder came into the man's face. It was in some dream that he had seen this woman, or some woman like her, before. It was a bad dream.

Somehow he felt that she had done him ill. He felt a shrinking. She was something evil; he did not know what. But he was filled with fear for a moment that his mother might somehow pass and see her speaking to him on the street. He turned and fled on southward, leaving the woman, with her face alight, still holding out the barking Skye above the snowy pavement in the glare of the restaurant windows.

What was the cold he felt? His feet faltered as he turned a corner and kept on. The chill clutched at his very heart. Where was she, oh! where was she? If he could find her and her little room, where the fire was, she would hold his hands before it and warm them, and stroke his head, and cry and scold him, and put him between the snowy sheets of her bed; and in the morning he would wake and see her smiling at him with her sweet soft eyes beneath her waving hair—her hair that waved in "crinkles," as he called them. Oh, he was so cold! Was she home? and where had

she been? and would Mrs. Flynn let him in if his mother was not there?

Thinking this as he ran, he saw a great open space broadening before him. There were wide paths through the snowy grass of it, and benches. He staggered to a seat. It was strange, but he was warmer now. A genial heat seemed to spread upward from within him. Yes, he would go to Little West Twelfth Street when he had rested a moment in this pleasant warmth, and he would find her, and she would not mind. The internal warmth grew to a prickly heat, and he felt that there was something in his mouth. He spat it out. There was a great stain of red upon the bench.

* * * * *

What a rollicking lilt there was in the merry music that came driving with the storm down curving Broadway! What weird figures the five made dancing through the snow! Oh, those mad wags from Neilson Place! They had danced through all the town, and now, still abreast, still arm in arm, they were dancing homeward in the Christmas morning, still singing Maître Audran's gay Provençal score with all the abandon of Avignon. Still dancing, still singing, they whirled into Madison Square.

"Ah ha!" cried the red-headed law clerk, spying the bench. "What have we here?"

"Some brother a little more overcome than ourselves," hiccupped the thin painter of plaques.

The taller of the two medical students stepped toward the prostrate man on the bench. Then he dropped on one knee in the snow. "It's the man from Victor's—Wolsey—and blood!" he cried. "Run, you fools—it's a hemorrhage! Get some salt, quick!"

His four comrades plunged out wildly toward the hotel lights that fringed the square. The medical student remained kneeling by the bench.

The Mad Poet's eyes were wild and hot no longer as he opened them, but mild and clear, and with a winning thanks within them that those who knew him said no man nor woman had ever resisted. His voice came in a whisper from beneath his dabbled beard. "I thought—I was—a—little child," he gasped. "I went to—find my—mother—who—is dead."

There was a crystal on the face above him which did not come from melted snow.

"Never mind, old man," said the man whose arm supported him. "Don't talk. We'll pull you through."

A look of fright and horror came into the Mad Poet's face at the cheery mention of that which is known as life.

"Oh—no!" he gasped; "not—that. I have seen—what it was—my life." He stopped speaking and sighed. That same warmth he had felt within him before, he felt again. Oh, sweet arch face! oh, kindly smile! bending, bending. "My

pretty mother," he whispered. The blood, welling, stopped his speech.

The five figures stood uncovered in the snow.

* * * * *

They swept away the stains before the people passed through the square to church that Christmas morning. The usual Christmas revels went on down-stairs in the Café Vingt-Vins, though five customary participants were missed from them, and Clementine went about the house with reddened eyes and a swollen face. In the third-story front there was a sheet stretched over a form upon the bed; and one who saw it, and knew the story, thought—his notions of the life here and hereafter being perhaps more poetic than precise—that not in the church, but in the company of St. Aloysius, he had heard his mother sing.

The Appearance of Evil



DAY and autumn lie dying
together in that weary,
manless waste of "up-

*Some Account
of the
Adventures of
a Cameo*

town" which is peopled in good weather by nursery maids, children, and policemen, which is peopled in such weather as this but by the latter, who stand water-proof statues of discomfort upon the corners. The cars jingle drearily up the great avenues and along the boulevard streets. Their few passengers watch the trickle of the gentle rivulets of which each umbrella is a source. The horses, plunging through the puddles at each crossing, deluge and render more damply miserable, if possible, the infrequent and unfortunate by-passers. The conductors clench their teeth against the rain, the drivers shut their eyes, and both smell of whiskey. At every basement window in the side streets are children looking out, and making their small moan over the wasted Saturday. Day and autumn dying, and some one else dying near Seventh Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street. It is Boston Kate.

There had been a clergyman to see her during

the afternoon. He had talked with her—tried to rouse her to the awfulness of her position.

"I never hurt any one, doctor," she said, shooting her great eyes at him from under their drooping lids in a mechanically business-like way. "What makes you think I'm so wicked?"

"But your life," he said; "your life!"

"My life is what it has to be," said she, rising into logical conciseness of statement, with the consciousness of logical mastery. "Now, see here. I'm beautiful; at least, I am when I'm well. Only last month there was a fellow I met at the 'Balmoral' wanted to pay me to have some pictures taken for fancy pictures. I guess it was a cigarette advertisement—in the windows, you know, they stick 'em. Wanted to pay me, and came in a cab for me, only I wouldn't get up in the forenoon for it. Now, a girl ain't as good-looking for nothing—she's going to get something for it. You know lots of girls that get fine husbands, I s'pose, with their fine looks. S'pose they couldn't get 'em, then what, eh?—s'pose the men they could marry were mill-hands, then what, eh?" The iteration ended with a gasp and a cough.

"The only use for the talent of beauty is to be beautiful," said the clergyman, whom the argument, from its novelty to him, touched at first only on his mental side.

"That ain't using it. That ain't according to the Bible, is it—or the prayer-book Belle read to

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me the other day? I kind of get 'em mixed; seems as if they were a good deal alike in parts."

The priest looked at her, and shook his head sorrowfully. "You can't see, can you?" he said. "But your parents, your family—you hurt them actually, didn't you, by acting as you did?"

The first expression of actual ill-nature that had appeared during the conversation came into the girl's sleepy eyes.

"*Much* I did!" and with a gesture of scorn she turned her face away.

There seemed no reaching this life, Dr. Stylites thought. There was a sort of conscious rectitude about it, a conviction that it had been, if not right, at least as it must have been, and a logical and undisturbed disregard of the consequences—a reliance upon the great rock of completion of its part of the contract, according to its terms as given, that was impregnable.

He prayed, and she thanked him, and he went away; and then the doctor came, and asked how she was, and laughed and chatted with her. He departed also. And the gas was lighted in the gorgeous room that Hecht & Hoffmeyer's (brokers of 8 Wall Street, branches in Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago) cashier had furnished. He was a precocious young Hebrew, this cashier, and had thought to spend many a pleasant Sunday in those apartments; but the central office had been tracking him before the place was hired, and that spir-

ited dash for the Queen's dominions for which he is justly famous was the only thing for him before the last picture-nail was driven.

They had shown their yellow tusks at her, the patriarchs; but she had her lawyer—a brave who had worn the war-paint of Tammany for far too many moons, and followed the various sachems on far too many bloody trails, to be frightened at the oily threatenings of those whom he called “The old-clothes men in the *Tribune* Building,” meaning thereby Messrs. Cohen & Kalbfleisch, leading Jewish commercial lawyers and attorneys for Hecht & Hoffmeyer—and so she kept her spoils.

The gas was lighted and the room was pleasant. Its tenant chattered with the girl who was watching her, about the various Jacks and Charleys of their acquaintance, and expressed decided impatience as the hours moved on apace, and she knew the nightly riot was beginning in her old haunts.

“You see that pin?” she said, pulling out a scarf-pin which confined her night-dress at the throat. “I wonder where the fellow is that gave me that? He was a civil engineer. I never saw him before that time, and he went to Arizona next day, with Colonel Lawrence—— You knew Colonel Lawrence—big man—used to come to the “Folly” and set up the champagne. I asked him for something for luck, and he pulled this out and gave it to me. Kind of fresh, but clever of him—wasn’t it?”

The great, round drops of rain splashed at the pane. Outside, the interminable lanes of light flared, like torch-bearers awaiting some vast procession that never came, over the deserted and foggy streets. And an hour afterward there were some sorrowful oaths sworn at the "Folly," where the clerks were just drifting with their week's salaries in their pockets, and the strains of "Der Seecadet" were just beginning to boom and thrill from within the railing, for word came that Boston Kate was dead.

She had just put in some scornful comments on the French novel that was being read to her, when all at once a great hand seemed to reach under the white breast, and seize the cardiac nerves, and twist and tie them in awful knots, till she gasped, and her eyes rolled up, and her lips were parted in piteous imploring, for once natural. So, with her lips apart, and staring at the ceiling, she writhed a little, and then grew cold and still. And through the windows of the little Ritualist chapel came pouring—was it in mockery?—the strains of the *Nunc dimittis*. Perhaps not. There is a difference between the greatness of a sin and its prominence. And, too, though on the plain we see a mighty difference between the mole hill and the mound, from the mountain they are one to us, and collectively nothing.

* * * * * *

"I feel," said Mr. Thomas Craven, "like a

sailor home from a voyage, or a miner back from the diggings. I have on a pair of thin boots and a white shirt; and I seem to think it necessary to go somewhere and get drunk, and otherwise dissipate my hard earnings."

"You can do both here," said his friend, with a glance about the café of the "Alexandra." "It will take you a long time to get drunk on claret; *ergo*, the pleasure will go so much further, and the prices will dissipate anything. Here, too, the waiters could put you in your room when you got through, and thus dim to your family and Miss Cottrell the story of your exploits."

"It isn't in keeping with the character," said the other, with a yawn. "The waiters whisper. I would have them bawl. The people look at you suspiciously. They are all afraid that some one they don't know will speak to them. They haven't the debonair style, which I crave, of spilling beer on you, and then apologizing with that profuse courtesy which characterizes the gentlemen of 1830, and which the gents of 1880 think is still in vogue, and waving for your glass to be refilled in a damn-the-expense kind of a way. I suppose they do it in order to experience a Lucullan sensation for five cents. I have felt tempted to it."

"Craven," said the other, "why don't you flaunt that stunning pin you used to wear? I expected to see it come back with gloves and cane."

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Mr. Craven reddened a little.

"It was green——"

"Yes, beryl," said his friend, abstractedly, taking in with the intent eye of a painter of *genre*—which he was: Mr. Blackanwyte of the Salmagundi—the line of street-lamps gleaming in the mist along the sweeping curb of Madison Square.

"No; I mean my conduct. It was green, I suppose. A good deal might be argued from it, in fact, though I only saw her in a music-hall for half an hour."

"H'm," said the artist, slowly turning, as his voice finished the arc of inflection which it had described in enouncing the syllable. "In a music-hall—her?—who?—what? Did you give a person whom you met for half an hour in a music-hall an article of your personal apparel?"

"I did," said the other, fortifying himself from the decanter, and leaning back in his chair in sullen apprehension of the attack.

"Ah!" said the artist, slowly reaching into his coat-tail pockets for his handkerchief. "You sport a crest, I think? Now, how much better it would have been if the pin had had that in it, since your object must have been identification with the lady; or why couldn't you have given her a pair of sleeve-links with your monogram on them—and—no, she probably wouldn't have had an autograph album—or you might have written your name in it; still, you *could* have given her

your photograph; you *might* have done that; that was heedless—very.”

Mr. Blackanwyte, having found his handkerchief, wiped his glasses with it, and then retired behind it and them. The return fire was wild and stammering, in military parlance. Mr. Craven choked a laugh, looked perplexed, and finally retorted: “You think you’re damned clever, Blackie.”

“Eh!” said the other, surprisedly, whose face, with repressed laughter, had by this time grown as red as that of his companion.

“Oh, see here, now, that’ll do for guying; but, by gad, sir!”—and Mr. Craven sat bolt upright, and upheld an oratorical finger—“you could have given that woman the best and the best-known picture you ever painted for a sitting, and made money on it, and fame. She was a Dobson woman, by Jove!—a proverb in porcelain—a belle marquise. You ought to have seen her—eyes like that pin—beryl, by Jove!—and the saucy cock-nose, and the frank, arch way! I say, I never saw her but for half an hour in a public place; and I never go to such places, only I wanted to stand in with old Lawrence, and you know what an old tough he was. It’s deuced good for my reputation that the Apaches did fetch him. Hang me, if that was civil engineering, I’ll take military next time. He used to say, poor old devil! that he’d rather lay the bridge at Freder-

icksburg over again than be pegged at from behind sage-brush all day. But she was a delicious picture on view, and the admission was cheap—cheaper than the half I paid to see that rotten daub of Hunt's that you dragged me in to look at a year ago—by the way, what's become of it?"

Mr. Craven put down his glass, which he had been sipping as the stream of his eloquence grew slower, and looked justified, if not acquitted. By this time his companion had quite lost his propensity to giggle, and looked amusedly interested, though incredulous.

"I know the type of face you mean; it's commoner than you think, though it may have reached an unusual degree of perfection here; still, I don't think it did—I don't think it did; and I never could stand the paint—get too much of it in the shop, I suppose."

"Paint!" said the other good-humoredly, and in high glee at having diverted his opponent's attack by presenting the artistic side of his temptation. "If you could paint as well as she did—if she painted—I'd glory in your friendship, old boy."

They parted soon after, Craven having a pressing engagement; but, as Mr. Blackanwyte reached the street-door of the "Alexandra," his sense of the humorous again so overcame him that a waiter passing, and tracing, in the manner of his class, an eccentricity to a vinous source,

feared for a moment the public disgrace, both of the "Alexandra" and one of its most frequent habitués.

This was the night the girl died.

* * * * *

It was the shivery Monday of the next week that Mr. Craven and his *fiancée*, Miss Cottrell, of East Fifty-eighth Street (there are the twin lamps of ex-mayoralty beside the steps, the only relics of the popular uprising of 187-), were passing the door of St. Peter's.

It stood open, and the young lady suddenly remembered that the new fresco was reported done, and expressed a wish to see it. They entered, and, after gazing at the thing long enough for Miss Cottrell to exhaust her stock of painter's jargon on it, were turning to go, when the rector bustled across the chancel. He would like to see Miss Cottrell—it was about the *Magnificat*; he had a funeral—a sad case—would she wait? They occupied a front pew while the clergyman darted back into the vestry for his habiliments, and as he reappeared the cortege entered.

Scant was the assemblage of mourners. A few richly but quietly dressed women, with nothing about them to set any but the metropolitan eye askant, except their uniform good looks and complete lack of male escort.

After the service was read, the stout priest, who

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feared not to censure the great, and—rarer valor in this penny-press-ridden era—to admonish the lowly, hesitated a moment and then began to speak.

It was not in accord with the spirit of the age; it had never been in accord with the teachings of the true church, which themselves were in accord with the best spirit of every age—and that spirit of the present age, of which he spoke, might in fact be the fruition of these teachings, and one of the ever-assembling witnesses of the near approach of the time when all the flock should be gathered in the one fold—it was not in accord with that spirit and these teachings to pronounce upon the future state of any soul. But here was a woman who had died unrepentant, blindly, not wilfully so, perhaps. What could we think?—what could we say?—would there be an opportunity for awakening? We could not know. But the church—whatever its heresiarchs had taught—the church had never taught that we might not pray, might not hope so. Still, remembering the woman dying as she had died, he thought of her wondrous beauty—famed, he believed—as of the riches of a wealthy man. What could they avail him after?—what could it avail her after?

The unoccupied but active mind of Miss Cottrell, ever ready to seize with the zest of a *bon vivant* any new tidbit of sensation, had keenly relished the incident and the clergyman's dis-

course thereon. She was a woman, be it said, of mature years and understanding, and quite devoid of *mauvaise honte*. The seat she had rather hastily taken, she afterward noticed with some confusion and fear of disturbing the mourners, was directly behind the trestles upon which the undertaker's assistants laid the open coffin, and these were much nearer the pews than the chancel steps. Obeying one of those vulgar impulses which are inherent in all mankind, she craned forward slightly, and thus commanded a full view of the dead girl's face. Mr. Craven, with like interest, perpetrated the same solecism.

There ran a smile about the circle of women now gathered about the bier. It was nuts to them. The gentleman started back with an exclamation of surprise. The lady did the same. One saw one thing—the face he had seen, in all its beauty a year ago; the same now, thanks to the kindly little boxes, as fresh, and bright, and pure as ever, only the eyes were closed. The other saw—and her companion did, as he looked again when her gaze met his—fastening the yellow lace at the fair throat, the beryl pin. Then Miss Cottrell turned, as if to leave him, but controlled the impulse, and sat down averting her gaze, while Craven was left staring, with the eyes of the amused Camillians and the pained looks of the rector upon him at the face, and coffin, and scarf-pin of Boston Kate.

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THE street is the same as it used to be. I visited it the other day, and I doubt if it has changed

Related by One
of the
Gentlemen who
Came Home
Late

much since the year of grace, say, '53. There is a church at one end of the block, the Fifth Avenue end; and a queer old tavern, that may have stood there since the days of the Albany post road, at the other, the Sixth Avenue end. I don't know much about the church, but the best two kinds of punches were always on file at the tavern—the "London" and the "milk." We were *habituels*, Frondeur and I, until one night—a little too much Tenniel in the London *Punch*, I suppose, was the cause, or mayhap a sniff too much of nutmeg—we grew rather hot and loud over the staple discussion of the time, Dickens and Thackeray, and they always put so little Tenniel or nutmeg in our punches after that that we left in disgust. The houses are low on the street, and a good many have white doors with round, brass knobs. I don't think the street could ever have been modish, but that it was born bourgeois, and stayed so. It harbors neither swell nor shop, and its nearest

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approach to dignity is its neighborhood to the residence of a retired Machiavelli of State politics around the corner.

It was an oppressively quiet street. We, the gentlemen who came home late, and she, the woman who sang, were the sole disturbing elements. We used to sit in the summer nights with open windows to hear her concerts, which began about ten, and went on to midnight. Our concerts were *al fresco*, and, in the German custom, were frequently given at sunrise, though oftener than every May-day. Ours, as to noise and discord, were Wagnerian, but she was a true Italian. But the neighbors slept through both, as they do in the city through all noises—of cats, milkmen, and drays for the ferries. It was only when we had not the material for getting up one of our concerts that we attended hers—that is to say, when we were poor, and had to stay in the house. It would have paid us at the same price as that of one of our own *musicales*. She was of the "old school good school," as I said, with its trills, and quavers, and surrenders of sense to sound. Well I remember it. The hot, dark room, lighted only by a pipe at each window, and the glare of the street-lamp at the curb beneath, which also feebly penetrated the dark bank of foliage—for the street was shady—between us and the singer, and then rising through the sultry hush of the night from her windows the notes of some famous aria.

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I thought her voice perfect and battled for my conviction with Frondeur, who had heard more operas than I had heard of; but "Pshaw, I tell you it is worn! But she is a consummate artist," he would say.

One night—(a rather dumpish one, for the *finale* of our concert of the previous one had been rather tremendous)—one night, I say, we were just going to stay up for the first number. When it came, it was a plaintive bit of sentiment that I vaguely recognized as Bellinian; but when it was finished, Frondeur knocked the ashes out of his pipe and said, plaintively:

"She must be an old woman. She has sung with Steffanone."

"Steffanone!" I said.

He laughed. "That sounds to you as old as the piper who played before Moses; but true it is." And to bed we went, with the memorial of Castle Garden opera and the great Havana company still ringing in our ears.

That she had sung with Steffanone made her singing sweeter to Frondeur than if she had sung like a new Steffanone, for it brought him a bit of his past back. A Second Empire kind of a past was Frondeur's; a past of Offenbach first nights, and of Mabilles, and of the Boulevard whereon Heine said the Deity, grown *ennuyé*, might look of an evening to enliven himself; a past wherein he had not heard opera from the second-story win-

dow of a West —th Street lodging-house, but from the boxes, or oftener the wings. A man of the world down in the world. What sadder situation! Lucifer cast from a heaven of clubs and coteries, to writhe in a Tophet of tap-rooms and beer-gardens. From Fifth Avenue to Sixth; it is more than a block, as well for men as women.

Another night Frondeur did something rash. It was a "Trovatore" night. She had sung something—the "Tacea la Notte," I think—and then had let her fingers wander at random over the old score. Snatches and catches we got of all the most hackneyed melodies, till we marked the quick leap of "Di Quella Pira." Frondeur squirmed in his chair. "I wish she would play that again," said he. Sure enough, something in the spouting melody had arrested the listless fingers. It began again, and with the note came one from my chum, struck with wonderful accuracy, considering the distance. The piano stopped, and then came the sharp repetition that marks the waiting accompaniment. Frondeur jumped to his feet—had I ever seen him do so before—and went storming up the splendid score clear to the great A and down again without a break, the piano firmly accompanying. I had never heard him sing before except the anthems whereby and with hallooing Jack Falstaff lost his voice. Then he sat down and damned himself in the polyglot profanity which I envied.

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"There's your prima donna, Ned," he said, the next evening, as we started back to our rooms after dinner. I looked up, and along the shady street I saw a stoutish woman, a little less than middle-aged, with brown clustering hair and red cheeks, and a broad, laughing mouth, advancing toward us. Frondeur worked at home during the day, and had seen her before from his window.

"Not quite divine, eh, Pendennis?"

"I am not likely to apotheosize any opera singer," I said, somewhat ruffled by his airs of seniority.

"Gad! you might as well that as the other thing, for all you know about 'em. She'd better 'ware of dog-catchers, though."

I had noticed a little hound running along the gutter by her side, loosed from the leash which she held in her hand.

As Frondeur spoke, one of two men who had been driving a dilapidated horse and cart slowly along the street as we walked, leaped suddenly from his seat, and dashed straight at the unfortunate dog. It was all in a moment. Coming in the same direction as ourselves, who had almost met the singer, he had to pass us to reach her pet. Strange to say, he neither passed us nor reached the pet; for the elder of the two gentlemen in his path, without so much as turning a glance over his shoulder, suddenly changed his cane from his left hand, wherein he had swung it, to a position

under his right arm. The knob was heavy, and protruded a matter of eighteen inches behind the gentleman's back. I prayed then, and I pray now, that one of the blackguards whom the city of New York licenses to worry ladies and children, and harass and madden harmless animals in its streets, lost an eye by that manœuvre—as neat a one as may be found in Jomini. At any rate, he said he had, emphatically. Pray heaven, as I said, that for once in his dirty life his foul lips spoke truth. The signora was quick as Frondeur; her clasp was on the dog's collar, the brute himself was in her arms, and she, with tucked-up skirts, was running homeward for dear life before the billingsgate recitative was half over. We followed slowly; for she had turned back as soon as Frondeur had stood his ground long enough to say so, and so reached her house ere long, and without incurring a suspicion of premeditated resistance to the law. She stood on the steps. The dog was safely housed. With her *embonpoint* in a state of billowy agitation, her cheeks flushed, and eyes sparkling, the signora was simply charming. She shook her fan at Frondeur as if she had known him for years. She would not have done it to me. It was the freemasonry of Bohemia. "Ah, sir, it was inimitable, that ruse! You are Napoleon, and all for my little dog; but he was Barillo's dog, Crispino—he named him."

Frondeur bowed and laughed.

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"A musical animal, indeed! Do you think he could strike a key from a piano across the street?"

She gave a pretty little gasp of surprise, and then a suppressed scream of delight.

"Oh, my Manrico! and *you* are the Troubadour—Il Trovatore? And the dog-catcher shall be Di Luna. Imagine him in 'Il Balen'! But you had an encore—half a dozen. I tried you on 'Favorita' and 'Lucia.' "

"Indeed!" said Frondeur, with one of his frank laughs. "I spent what voice I had in your service, and have hardly been able to speak since. Besides, you know, a man must sleep one night a week."

She asked us in after a little more of badinage, and, in truth, I was not sorry, fearing from our clatter that the neighbors, who went to bed, I think, with the sun, would rise in barbaric wrath and expel us from the precincts of Philistia.

Was there ever a pleasanter evening spent than in that second-floor front? The room was a revelation to me. Books, and music, and pictures in hopeless confusion. Piles of little, chunky, green-covered French novels. Balzac and Paul de Kock—the signora was not squeamish evidently; autograph scores innumerable, some of them of great name. Each of the wondrous trio whose splendid song-burst filled the earlier years of the century, and made Italy forget her chains—each of these, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, was represented. I pro-

voked a roar from Frondeur, and a piteous appeal from the signora, by asking the latter if she had known the author of "Sonnambula," who died, be it said, when she, though no chicken, was in long dresses.

Nay, there was never such an evening before in my life, and there have been few since, for the signora was not to stay, and Bohemia is like the early Rome. Its women are few; the Sabines have to be ravished from the outlying countries—Belgravia, Philistia, perhaps too often Alsatia. Smoke and snatches of song floated out of the open windows. It was the crowning triumph of home products, I thought, when she accepted a cigarette from my Virginians, and declined Frondeur's Honradez, saying as she did so, in mock anger:

"It is from the way I sing, then, that you think my throat is made of copper?"

But the cigarettes went out and the songs died, when these two old soldiers got fairly to fighting their battles over again. What one had not heard in Venice, the other had sung at St. Petersburg. And he, too, had bought pearls for Clarisse; yes, but not such big ones as the baronet who shot himself. He had gotten out of these waters ere great winds and large fish troubled them. Ah, well, there was not vinegar enough in the world once to dissolve the pearls of Clarisse; but she died in a hospital. "And where were the pearls, and the English baronets, and the Yankee stu-

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dents?" said the signora, striking a melancholy chord on her grand piano. "But she could not sing, Clarisse, nor act; she was a shape to hang dresses on." And the signora touched the keys again and sang one word, "A-de-la-i-da," as Beethoven wrote it. Some people had shapes and some had voices. And he had known Spinelli?—then Spinelli had borrowed money from him. Yes, and he had been paid with a little *buffa*—so. And she bobbed her head and crooked her fingers, and sounded a note that was nearly bass, with a droll grimace.

How long it would have gone on I know not, had not Frondeur asked her if she had ever dined at the Stromberg Café, in Strasse So-and-so, Vienna. The signora stared, flushed, and then, with a symptom of asphyxia, told him his European remembrances were mixed. We went home then, and suddenly, on the way, Frondeur was seized with the same difficulty in respiration, and finally gurgled out words to the effect that the café in question was like the clan MacGregor, and had a name that was nameless by day. He had confused it with some other.

There were many visits across the street as the summer wore on. We suspended our concerts pretty much. There was some place to go of evenings, music to be heard without paying for it in drink, and the signora's lively talk, and droll, graceful ways, supplied the stimulus to exercise, which two flagging and fatigued brains used to

seek in kümmel and brandy. We had been getting, in truth, into a habit of spiritual inebriety that was as dangerous as pleasant. Brutal drunkenness, staggering, fighting, falling in gutters would have disgusted us both utterly, but each of us knew himself and knew his fellow; knew that a little of the divine essence would sharpen the senses and loosen the tongue; that the application of the beautiful in sound, and shape, and color would be heightened; that fancies would arise and express themselves in apt speech; that quaint thoughts would pass into felicitous sentences; that, in short, the mental freshness which comes and goes with youth, and leisure for reading and meditation, would be renewed. The signora, as I said, supplied this in a great measure. Except for such forced and artificial growth, we had pretty much reaped and gleaned each other's minds, plucked them bare of fruit, and hers was a new variety which we could both pick and graft on the old stock.

One day I had been obliged by a raging headache to leave the treadmill for a season, and so rode up through the blistered streets to the end of our block, and then, with half-closed eyes, reeled along the pavement to the door of our domicile. Entering the rooms I found them empty, front and back. Frondeur's work, New York correspondence for the Paris *Tambour*, lay on the table. I thought he had gone down to the Café Vingt Vins to get

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some politics out of the morning papers. Then I heard a well-known laugh outside the window, and looking across the street saw the truant ensconced in the singer's casement, chatting gayly, with the stem of his long porcelain pipe in his teeth. I laughed afterward when analyzing, according to my habit, the feeling of the moment. It was not jealousy. It was thoroughly childish. He had not played fair. He had run away from—"shaken" me. He had taken more of the cake than belonged to him. Perhaps they were laughing at me and my greenness. I flung myself on a lounge with a jar that set my head swimming nearly into the misty ocean of unconsciousness. I lay there half stupid, watching the lazy wave of the leaves in the heat that seemed almost visible in its permeating intensity. After a while he came in whistling, in capital spirits.

"Hullo, old man! Sick, eh? What's the matter? Some old spree come back on you? Thought you skipped a headache or two last spring. Getting it now—mills of the gods, you know."

Then he went on to tell me where he had been. I informed him that I knew.

Why hadn't I come over, then? She looked cool and fresh enough of a morning to cure a headache, and she might have fussed me up. There was nothing like a woman around when you are sick.

I thought sickness of all kinds disgusting, I

said, and would not intrude it on any one. Besides, he had heard, no doubt, of that unlucky gentleman, Monsieur de Trop.

"De Trop! Ho, ho—and you think I've gone philandering, sentimentalizing?"

"Not by any means. There is no place for sentiment between you; but—I don't know that Charlotte is a married lady, or a moral man is Werther."

Frondeur laughed a little disgusted laugh.

"The old leaven is in your lump. From the easy way in which that woman admitted you to her acquaintance you have doubts of her. If you had been required to be viséed before you were let into the same room with her, and stamped and countersigned to insure introduction, you would have none. Oh, they are pretty safeguards, and of great avail. Damme! I wish I had a double X now for all the women I've known that way, and whom——" He stopped, and then went on more quietly. "That a woman smokes cigarettes and burns brandy in her coffee is a sign of nothing except that she disregards conventionalities, and I can bet you, boy, that if you take *that* for a sign of anything further you will get into awful trouble some of these days. There are no signs of anything further to be trusted."

I felt thoroughly ashamed by this time, and begged his pardon.

"You haven't harmed me," he said, "and it

isn't your fault. It's the cursed, foul narrow-mindedness of the society in which you and I and every gentleman were bred." He turned to his work and continued looking toward the opposite windows. "She's a good woman, and a good Catholic. I wish to God I were." For, like many a gentlemanly wreck, Frondeur was firm in the faith, if not proficient in works. Such people are the least blown about by the winds of doctrine of a time like ours. They receive their convictions in their youth, and lock them up in their bureaus, and, when bested by age or sickness or ill-fortune, bethink them of their beneficent qualities and take them out often; and, like all ignorant folk, who, knowing that a medicine is good, think that the larger doses they may take the better, so have longings for the shelter of the Romish communion, such as my chum expressed. This little tilt was unfortunate enough at the time, but afterward I was glad of the opportunity that a moment of nervous ill-humor offered to clear up all doubts on the question.

It was not to be expected that a woman so cheery as Madame Alberti—for such was her name—should not have friends, and we often saw them from our windows, and sometimes ran across them in our calls. There were many gay, gossipy ladies, some of them queens of song, who came with spicy bits of green-room scandal, grumblings about salaries and managers, and with anxious questionings

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for madame to answer about the horrors of the provinces. Neither was there wanting an occasional impresario, with a company to make up, and wanting material. We met one, a droll, bluff Frenchman, who advised her to pitch the doctors to the deuce and come along with him. She might as well die on her first night as stay where she was. But would he have her die on the stage and spoil a scene? He seemed to be in some doubt there. The disappointment of the audience might be counterbalanced by the free advertising that such an event would give his troupe.

There were needy songsters, too, in plenty, and I fear that madame's purse was too often opened to settle up old scores among the *table d'hôte* keepers of Wooster or Fourteenth Street.

As I indicated, madame was on the sick list. She would die—burst her heart—she said the doctors had told her, if she sang an opera through.

"You will find that high C a stepping-stone of your dead self to higher things, some time," said Frondeur, one night, as she mounted it with a little strain that began to be noticeable in her voice.

"Yes," she said; "to die on the high C, that would be pleasant, would it not?"

"Ay, or on the low one."

"That is not a good way to talk," she said, leaving the piano and coming toward him, "for you, though it might do for me, who have some-

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thing to complain of. Do you want to be running around Europe all your days doing nothing? Was the green-room such a heaven? I do not like your signs. You are careless. See the holes burned all over your clothes with sparks, and these stains at the third button of your vest; that is where the beer drops off the bottom of the glass. And your menagerie" (as he called the moon-jumping cows and zebras) "will eat you up by little pieces. Ah, you must not do that. I have seen so much"—and she turned to her instrument again with a face full of the pain of remembrance.

I was out of town for the two closing weeks of the summer, and knew nothing of what was going on in West —th Street. It was late one night shortly after my return that I sat in my room alone. Frondeur had gone across the street, but I was too far down on my luck to accompany him. Briefly, I was learning to accept defeat at the hands of the world. It is a hard lesson, and well it is to learn it young, as I did. I was beginning to find out that I was one of those "who don't, somehow, seem to get along," and the reception of the conviction was not pleasant. Presently my chum came in, and, after putting on his slippers and loading his pipe, inquired abruptly if I could afford a ticket to hear Alberti in concert.

"Who the deuce is Alberti? What—I thought she couldn't sing."

"The key of her life," said he, quoting his

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favorite Clough, as he puffed jerkily, "is not 'I will,' I suppose, but 'I must.' She can't starve."

"But I hadn't imagined she was hard up."

"No, I suppose not. She is one who will carry all sail till she runs under."

"She must have made a great deal of money."

"Ay, and spent it. They all do. Especially when they have a man to help 'em."

"And she had?"

"It would seem so? I fancy that like Sir Walter, and others, she has an old crack in her heart that was never more than half healed."

"And was the maker of the crack as worthy an artificer as the one who performed the office for—others?"

"Gad! I fancy he and Millie would have paired very well. Pity they hadn't—knifed each other, and saved a peck of trouble. But he's dead, and she's dead; and they cheated the devil, for they hadn't soul enough between them to make a rasher for his breakfast. And madame will sing in concert. And let us go to bed."

The first chill of autumn was in the air, the pavements shone with the first autumn rain, and the lamps flickered in the first autumn wind, as I slammed the door behind me and took my place with Frondeur on the back seat of the carriage that bore madame, her friends and fortunes, to her resuscitation in the musical world. She, with her

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skirts and hoop—it was in the hooped era—occupied the other seat.

“A bad night for it,” said Frondeur; “look out for your throat, madame.”

But madame did not heed him. She was thinking, as I guessed, of La Scala and her début, of youth, and health, and the sunny Italian skies, and the handsome tenor; and then, perhaps, of the northern drizzle and soak and cold, of foreign comrades, of the comradeship of defeat, and of death and poverty that were fighting for the possession of her. Her face lighted and her step grew buoyant though, as she mounted the steps of Chickering Hall. The crowd about, the lights, the carriages, the audience pouring in—these were the heralds of battle and victory. They were concert-singers, the others; and what lay-figures beside the queen of the great boards, the grand opera, with her ease and confidence and superior *rapport* with her audience!

What was the light in her face in that mad song from “Lucia”? Only the delight of triumph, or had she weighed the consequences and found truth in the old manager’s words, “Better die on your first night than live here”? Prescience she may not have had, but I think, in the calm of this later time, that the first strain of her aria from the orchestra filled her with high resolve and longing to go with the immortal numbers still on her lips or ringing in the ears through the sleep or waking

of those who heard, and that with this her face was radiant as Stephen's before the Sanhedrim.

As we drove home through the rain, she was pale and exhausted, but vivacious and happy. At the house an idea struck her. She would have a little supper. She was going to be rich now, and it was her treat. We boys had been fêting her all summer, she said, which we had been able to do out of the savings arising from the abandonment of our amateur entertainments. I should run around to Cretillon's and order something.

"Remember," she said, laughing, in the doorway, "*vin à discrétion ; à discrétion*, remember!"

I vanished into the darkness, and she went back into the light—in very truth.

When I returned—ten minutes of time—there was a bustle in the house and women in the room. Madame lay rigid on her sofa, and Frondeur was rubbing her hands. The light blazed on the pleasant room, and the books, and pictures, and music—shone on the polished keys of the open piano.

"What is it?" I gasped, in blank dismay.

"My God, my God, she is dead!" he cried, breaking down. And dead she was, on the high C, rehearsing her conquest. The servant came in a moment later with the tray from the restaurant. It seems rather ghastly now, but then I thought it a natural thing to do—the only thing, in fact. Frondeur and I had little or no money. I took the portemonnaie from the dead woman's pocket


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and paid for the supper. Then they turned us out. We were men. It was proper. Madame was left alone among strangers. In that chapel, or stall, of the temple of art the dishevelled Philistines watched its dead votaress till morn, and then, thank God! their work, begrudged, for her was done.

Dear madame! A memory that shall grow faint perhaps, as older memories have. We forget all things—home, mother, wife, children, friends—that we outlive. But ere I forget you, I will write you down, judicially enough, to have had a woman's grace, an artist's soul, and the voice of an angel.

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I

T was a small life, a mean Bohemia's
life, a disreputable life—Study of a Bit
to Anglicize it, a rather of flotsam
beastly little life—and why I should
chronicle it I do not know, unless that because
in its great crises it became unnecessarily and
always disagreeably tangled up with mine. Per-
haps mine was the appointed of heaven to com-
plement it, set it right, straighten it out. If so,
mine failed, and all but heaven might have failed
in the work it set me.

I first saw Tommy Tremaine at the close of a
raw September day, and also at the close of my
junior long vacation, and the close of the autumn
races in the great northern county at whose shire
town I then lived.

The crowd on the grand stand had thinned down
to ourselves—a group of college men, who yet
cherished our straw hats for the colored ribbons
upon them—the young women of our party, to
whom we talked and explained “horse” in a man-

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ner that would have excited the scorn of the most infantile attaché of a third-rate racing stable, and a group of young blackguards of respectable parentage, chief among which, if not altogether lovely, was Tommy Tremaine. It must have been about the year '73; for, if I remember rightly, Tommy's garments gave, in cut and color, the most *bizarre* expression of the demoralizing tendencies of the "inflated" period then terminating. His small, black head was covered with a rakish little gray telescope hat. A stand-up collar, surrounded by a light-green strap necktie, rose to the level of his ears, but separate from their tips a distance of some one and a half inches. A brown "diagonal" coat, sharply cut away from his stomach, and secured by a single button at the breast, protected his trunk and displayed a white waist coat with large black stripes and mighty coral buttons, over which glistened a huge-linked nickel chain. His legs were clad in trousers of a lavender check, flesh tight to the enormous spring at the bottoms, and his feet, set widely apart, were encased in a pair of those shoes which were known at the time as box-toes, the boxing consisting of a precipitous embankment at the end of each, with a ledge shelf, or sort of deck circumferent.

He stood on the highest of the long pine tiers of seats, and distributed profanity, tobacco juice, and knowing remarks about the flyers beneath us with liberal lips, quite *ore rotundo*. In the disper-

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sion of the first two articles, he had his peers in all the group about him; but as to the last, Tommy seemed to possess a monopoly, and we gathered that he alone had the *entrée*, which his comrades so desired, of the town pool-rooms during the nights of the race meeting. We had moved away from them a number of times, for girlish cheeks would flush and collegiate tongues would stammer at the frequent and foul interruptions of conversation; but, with that tirelessness in evil-doing which characterizes boyhood, the coterie had followed us about the stand. It was plain that Tommy Tremaine was talking at us. Finally the bell rang, and the starters for the last heat of the great 2 : 25 race—for 2 : 25 is fast time, or was, then, in some sections—came trotting to the string. Off they went together around their first curve, and, stretching along the straight track of the second quarter, went flying through the dusk of the gathering twilight, a strange succession of shapes of horse and man, for none could see the wire-wheeled sulkies behind and beneath them. Out came the glasses—mine wandering, I know, beyond the track-bounds to the chilly woods, where the red sun was setting and the crows cawing. Passing the half-mile-pole, a chunky black brute, who had trotted easily in the rear, suddenly started forward, lapped his nearest leader, passed him and so on down the string, as if it had been of telegraph poles. It was a grand

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sight, but there was hearing to be gratified, too, for behind us rose an impish voice:

“By —— (fill the blank the worst way you can), look at that —— —— —— close the gap!”

Whereat the blood of big Jack Norton, of '75, waxed hot within him, and, with a fell swoop, he seized the phenomenon and hauled him down—down the steps to the entrance, and then bestowed a kick which sent him to the earth, without need of self-locomotion, in a murky cloud of blasphemy. And so falls the curtain on the first act of my hero's life.

II

The long delights of preparation for the bar were upon me when the curtain rose again. I had finished college, gone on my class-day spree, my fraternity supper spree, attended my literary society spread. I had been present at commencement, applauded and contributed my mite to the solitary flower-basket for the single man of all my society men who carried off an honor—for the D. Chs. swore by the time-vindicated rule that honor-men never came to anything. I had done all this, and settled down four years behind my less-favored brethren, the not liberally educated, to learn how to make a living. I had found that all the law I had ever heard of, and all its interpreters were obsolete and useless. I found that nobody read Coke; none but old lawyers, of evenings, Black-

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stone, and that the only thing for a lawyer to know was the Code of Civil Procedure, which was superseded by a new one as soon as I had learned it. And so I sat behind the blinds of the outer office on sleepy summer afternoons, and held the annotated book of books upside down, and watched across the spreading mead which served my native village for a main street the court-house janitor extracting weeds from the spaces between the paving-stones that flagged the way to his castle; and occasionally, when not too hot, stepped out to play catch on the court-house green with the district attorney, who was a matter of three years ahead of me at college.

Sometimes the district attorney and myself would vary the monotony of things by playing catch in the evenings, and I remember, one night, as I watched the straggling procession of damsels that passed down the main street to its nightly round of shopping and soda-water, asking the public functionary who a particularly bright-faced chit, the prettiest bit of bisque that ever stepped out of a Union Square shop-window, was.

"That," said the terror of the criminal classes, swinging on his heel to deliver me a liner that nearly took me off my feet, "is Daisy Warren."

"The deuce it is!" said I, feeling of the ball, and wondering how it could burn so when it wasn't hot: "Why, she was a child when I left here."

"And what is the difference between a child

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and a woman, Bibrosko?" (which was my college nickname). "An inch one way, in the height of the head, two inches the other way, in the length of the dress. Where will you have it?" he concluded, alluding to the ball.

"Thanks," said I, "at the Clifton House," not alluding to the ball; and so Miss Daisy Warren passed out of sight and out of mind.

I have a disposition for midnight prowls which has, in my Metropolitan experience, excited the suspicions of many members of the police force, and, I fear, falsely fired the hopes of many a skulking ruffian on some lonely street along the North and East Rivers. I possessed it at the time of which I write.

One night, about a month after the conversation just chronicled, I was strolling over the Tompkinsville road, beneath a waning August moon. I remarked to myself that Queen Diana looked as if she had the mumps; also that her appearance, facially, was that of the malformed head of an idiot baby, and, likewise, I watched my shadow dart smoothly along the roadside grass, and moralized as to the difference between the shadow of a man cast on the Tompkinsville road, and that he threw beside the way of life, one so rigid, straight, forward-gliding, the other, crooked in shape and tortuous in progress. I was also thumbing in my mind a well-supported *dictum* of Dwight's—see Lectures, Vol. I., Head Corporations—that a

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township was but a *quasi* corporation, and could not be sued by a traveller for injuries sustained by reason of a defective highway. Suddenly I became aware that I was about to encounter a couple of pedestrians, who were sauntering up the little hill which overlooked the town, and down which I walked.

The party was equally divided as to sex, a youth and maiden. I hardly glanced at them as they neared. My walks had accustomed me to the observation of that finest fruit of the Constitution of 1789, the fruit of the abolition of parental authority. I never pondered on the drift of such matters. I only wondered what spoony young couples talked about, and I concluded that they didn't talk at all. As they passed, I looked once, and recognized them—the girl clad in a shimmering light-blue stuff. I could almost see the delicious coloring of her cheeks, and quite observed the curly soft fringe on her forehead, and the delicate contour of her face. The boy had only changed as the fashion-plates had changed. He did not chew now, but smoked; yet he still spat. I did not hear him swear. It was Tommy Tremaine and Daisy Warren. I confess a shudder of horror ran through me, and I felt virtuously indignant; but when I came to analyze the feeling, as I am careful to do with all my virtuous emotions, it dwindled down to a passion in Doll Tear-sheet's lines: "Away, you mouldy rogue, away!"

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I am meat for your master." Two nights after that the public prosecutor and myself had protracted our game of catch so far into the twilight that a very high fly, projected from the strong arm of the law into the neighborhood of the courthouse dome, had settled, descending in the gathering dusk on one of my orbs of vision. I remarked that we had better put the matter off the term upon his paying witness fees at Murphy's Shades, and we sauntered down the street. The official was just expressing his quandary as to whether the next Grand Jury would throw out as many of his bills as the last had, when from a crowd in front of a drug-store a swaggering slight figure approached me, and a piping voice begged a moment's conversation.

"I say, Mr. Duckworth," said Tommy—for it was he: "I wish you wouldn't say nawthin' about meeting us the other night. 'Cause, you see, Daisy's folks are way down on me, and she was scared as the devil; but I told her I guessed you'd keep it dark, bein' one of the boys yourself—and you will, won't you?"

"The other night?" I was malicious enough to say, wonderingly. "Ah, that was you and Daisy coming up? Indian Hill, was it? All right, Tommy. Mum's the word."

I was not altogether careless. A man who values as little the good and the true as the average young man does may yet cherish the beautiful.

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One hates to see a dainty bit of porcelain broken; but the old leaven leavened yet my lump—the old leaven of the college code. A college man will falsify the accounts he sends home, will refuse to pay his billiard-bill because his credit is cut off, will lie to his preceptors and cover his lies with a web of falsehood that no ray of truth may break through—but let him get accidentally into the inner workings of the worst conspiracy that was ever hatched, and if he lives by his principles, he will tell of it no sooner than the deepest implicated rascal of the gang. It is a strange code; but no stranger, perhaps, than most the brain of man has begotten. Yet had I known what I could have pre—but I have hardly enough of a story to tell any of it twice.

III

Park Row, broiling as to things inanimate, stewing as to things animate under a July sun. Park Row, with its dozen car-tracks defiantly shining back the afternoon glare, with its striving, melting, sweltering, ever-moving mass of humanity—with its eat-and-run restaurants, its clanging presses, its ever-scribbling hacks, its outlook on the City Hall Square, and, finally, with its overdone pavement reflecting its superfluous heat into the face and eyes of me, who loll above it in the office window of the *Sunday Flash*. Yet, as I

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look across that square to the stronghold of the law, as I think of the wilted judges assigned to chambers in vacation with the drone of the weary motions in their ears, of the sweltering press of the landlord and tenant proceedings, of the judgment-debtors simmerings in the examination rooms, where drooping junior partners and managing-clerks take their depositions with hands that smear and stick to, and smell of the very poor variety of court legal-cap—when I think of these things, I am glad that I have dropped the law, or the law me.

“You will never make a lawyer,” said my employer, as we parted; “but you have the stuff of a very picturesque Bohemian in you.”

“Starvation *per alium*,” I thought, “may be deuced picturesque, but I’ll be hanged if it is *per se*.”

So we severed, I to Prague, and he to bend double at his desk and wear away another year of life, and then to ascend the bench, and in another year die of day calendars and bad air. I am on the *Flash*. It is not a great daily, nor a conservative weekly. It is a journal of civilization to come with the Lord of Misrule, the Messiah of Herr Schwab. It is one of the sheets that you may see in plenty of a Sunday morning on some Ninth Avenue newsstand, and look at and wonder what in God’s name will come when the process is complete, and the final fermentation of this stuff in the manner of minds that receive it takes place,

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and then pray heaven that you may die young and die a bachelor, that neither you nor your children may be there to see.

Yet perhaps my bread and butter-making is no more shameful than that of most subordinates, and the shames, the daily, hourly shames of the understrapper. When I see him fare forth on Saturday nights with his weekly pittance, save his husbanded mite to keep life in him for another week, in his pocket, and I think of what he has been through through the day, and what he will go through through the night, I say: Go forth; drink, rake, and force the pace generally, like a demon-ridden demon; for to-night, at least, thou wilt be free, and a man and master of thyself; and well done, good and faithful, that thou hast the heart for it, and hast not long before this gone swirling down the Narrows, a sallow-faced, pinch-nosed, stare-eyed corpse.

I thought of these things as I looked out of the window, and considered that if discipline was strict among the Condottieri while in service, they were at least the Freest of Lances, from captain down to horse-boy, the moment the harness was off; and was glad I was a bravo. All at once my meditations were interrupted:

"You're wanted, Duckworth," and I turned.

There, just across the threshold of the sanctum door, nervously fingering his hat and scraping his feet, was Tommy Tremaine.

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"Oh, Mr. Duckworth," said he: "could I see you a minute?"

I followed him into the hall.

"I've heard of you down here," he went on, clearing his throat: "and they say up home that you've been in a pretty bad way yourself, and that's why I come to you, because you ain't now, are you?"—the last rather eagerly.

"I'm doing as well as I can expect," I answered. "Why, what's the matter, Tommy?"

"Well, you see, I'm broke. Daisy and me's down here."

"You are!"

He stopped and looked a little frightened, and glanced apprehensively at the stairway; for I was big and he was little, and I dare say I looked bigger than I was. Seeing, as I had seen, the depths of human misery, the squalid wants, the desperate woes—living as I had lived, among men to whom the moral law was a theory like other codes, a dry collection of arbitrary rules, titled, articleed, and sectioned, to be interpreted and discussed, compared and analyzed like any statute—not a swift-working, involuntary, uncomprehended spring of action—I had grown accustomed to laugh at the things the polite world calls sins and shames; but by some incomprehensible law of character, something connected with association perhaps, just as a scent smelt once in other times and places, fleeting a moment through our air, an old chord of

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music retouched, will fit us with the surroundings of the past, make us of it—the sound of the girl's name led me back to old heights—those were low enough—and the intelligence struck me as it might have done two years before.

"Yes," he continued, "we ran away—we're married."

"Married!" I was rude enough and relieved enough to burst into a roar of laughter. My hilarity did not offend the little creature. A burden seemed to be lifted from him. A smile fled across his face. He resumed rapidly:

"Now, I want to borrow some money; I lost all mine at Long Branch races yesterday—Kingfisher, you know—and Daisy's awful sick, and they're going to turn us out."

"Daisy sick? What's the matter?"

He went on to explain that she had a fever—typhoid they thought it was now, though at first it had only seemed to be malarial. She was delirious when he left the hotel.

I was posed. Of course, I had no money. I was, and am, and always will be a man to whom the tearing of a shoe, the loss of an overcoat, the crushing of a hat is a serious misfortune because unforeseen. A man who, if he owed you fifty dollars, would have to pay you in ten weekly instalments of five dollars each, and cheapen his lunches to do it. I re-entered the office.

"See here, damn it, Frondeur."

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Frondeur would never look up from his writing unless you swore at him. I told the tale. He stopped the rapid scratch of his pen.

"Come in, my friend, come in. Young gentleman in temporary embarrassment? What hotel is it?"

He was told—the "International."

"Ah, yes; going to turn you out; brutal proprietor—haughty clerk—diamond breast-pin—sick wife—turn her out. Go to a hospital. Duckworth," turning to me in a splendid fury, "the hospitals of New York are a disgrace to civilization. Go up there at once and investigate this matter, and tell them, too, that you've come to inquire about the man whose room was entered there the other night."

I had been told that I would never make a lawyer. I believed at that moment that I would never make a blackmailer, and my heart fell. Why hadn't I, wondering on the matter, hit on this plan that suggested itself to my chief's mind in the dotting of an i?

We entered a blistered car behind two sun-struck horses and an asphyxiated driver, and were jingled in solitary state up through Centre Street—I saw that Tommy recognized the locality—past the Tombs—I wondered if he had been in there yet—through the great, shabby, cheap, tawdry, faded Bowery, and then bowled up Fourth Avenue, to the neighborhood of Twenty-third Street, and

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crossed to Broadway, and from there into the nest of caravansaries that line the crooked thoroughfare from its parting with Madison Square to its junction with Sixth Avenue.

We entered the hotel. I took the lead as we approached the clerk's desk, and Tommy shambled behind me over the cool marble pavement, shrinking beneath the curious gaze of the check-frocked porters and slippered call-boys. I took a mental note of it, the one thing that could shame him—the knowledge that the great silver absorbent knew that he had no aliquot portions of the mighty dollar. Drawing out my note-book, I easily addressed the magnate:

“Ah, the clerk of the ‘International,’ I think. I represent the *Sunday Flash*. There have a couple of little events of public interest recently occurred here that I would like to inquire about. A good many wild stories about an Arkansas gentleman losing some diamonds here have got about. Now we want to give you a hearing, and get at the bottom facts.”

I smiled pleasantly. He looked at me. I think that Mr. Booth could have neglected his English engagement profitably to have come to the “International” hotel just then for a study of baffled tyranny; and then he called the proprietor.

I rapidly repeated what I had already said, and then went on:

“There’s a young gentleman here of a very in-

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fluent family in the interior. You have heard, perhaps, of Senator Tremaine"—as undoubtedly he had, for Tommy's father was a notorious lobbyist, and had probably dropped enough to pay his son's score a dozen times at the bar of this particular house, when in conference with Metropolitan bosses.

"Oh, is that so?" he remarked. "I confess I didn't believe the youngster—didn't believe Dick Tremaine would let a boy of his get strapped like this."

"It's a runaway match, you see," I went on. "Now see here, Mr. Chamberlain, I have inquired at the various hotels, and I find that to turn out a person as ill as this young lady is, is a very unusual proceeding. Probably you have some especial reason. I want to hear both sides."

He hesitated. I could tell every thought and germ of thought in the man's mind at that moment, I believe. He considered: The *Flash* is a low sheet; but strangers read it, he thought, and travelling men, and some portion of any lie it can tell about me will stick in the minds of possible guests. Then I'll get a good notice about the robbery and let the young scamp stay.

The next issue of the *Flash* contained the following:

"A drunken Westerner succeeded in gulling one of the middle-aged maiden ladies who manage the *Daily Stock-Jobber* with a cock-and-bull story,

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last week, about having been robbed at the International Hotel. We think friend Chamberlain can stand any damages that a New York jury will mulct him in on the fellow's testimony, when it is made known to them, as it has been to us, that the man was seen on the night of the alleged theft in a state of beastly intoxication in one of the most notorious dives of the Twenty-ninth Precinct."

Tommy's spirits fairly bounded when the result of my *pour parler* was announced. In fact, he seemed to forget about his wife, and asked me into the *café*. I suggested that he might as well inquire of her health at least, which struck him as wisdom; and, loath to hang about the office, and yet not wishing to leave until I had ascertained the girl's condition, I followed him into the elevator.

Tommy chatted a good deal about the flyers at the Branch as we ascended, but I was rude enough to ignore his conversation and presence, and soon we reached his corridor and thence his room. He knocked at the door. A middle-aged, rather hard-featured woman opened it—evidently the housekeeper. To his inquiry, she gave a rather hesitating answer, from which I gathered that her charge was worse, and certainly that the doctor's evening visit had been hastened by a messenger of hers, and he was now shortly expected. I heard a little tossing and muttering in the room. We strolled back down the corridor to the window that

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overlooked a dreary waste of roofs that stretched over toward the North River. The afternoon was wellnigh spent, and the sun was drooping firily in a bank of ominous clouds toward the Jersey woods.

"Have you telegraphed for her people?" I inquired.

"But they wouldn't come, would they? And, great Scott! Mr. Duckworth, Dr. Warren would give me Hail Columbia if he did."

I remarked gravely that he would give him something worse if he came too late.

"But say, you don't think——"

At that moment we heard the sliding door of the elevator shaft open, and saw a professional-looking man emerge from it whom Tommy recognized as the attending physician. We asked him to come out and report after seeing his patient, which he promised. He came to me when he reappeared. His tone was grave, and he advised communication with the young lady's friends. After telling Tommy what I intended, I descended to the telegraph office. The young man accompanied me. The exuberance of spirits which his reprieve had occasioned was partially suppressed. There was considerable gloom upon his countenance. He appeared like a man who couldn't exactly see his way out, and I believe that he was beginning to compare mentally his present state of depression with memories of consciousness upon "mornings after."

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I sent my despatch, and we reascended. He went to the room again and knocked. The door was opened. I think my glance was quite involuntary and forgetful; but I remember what I saw, and the sight has haunted me since. Just a dainty little shoe, worn enough to dispel associations of the manufacturer and thoroughly humanize it, lying at the foot of a bed, where the girl had laid it, doubtless, when she last lay down, expecting to get up in the morning. Ah, that is the saddest of these things—the unexpectancy. They go to bed, and think to get up in the morning; and the morning comes, and already they are in the quickening current of a rapid river, whose banks are lined with eager hands that stretch and cannot save them. My God! what an intensified lonesomeness, to die among one's friends! I should like to be the last man, I think. Something occurred immediately afterward. The tossing and the muttering ceased. Then there came a cry, "Take him away, take him away! What's that boy doing in my room? O mother, mother, mother!" It broke in a sob. I turned sharp on my heel. The door opened wide; I could not help seeing. The little head sunned over with curls no more. They had cut them off, so far along was she; and I saw, even though the face was partially covered in the strange woman's bosom, where it had been buried for protection, that all the delicate cream and pink, the lily and

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rose were fused and blended into that horrible baked red of fever.

Tommy rushed out with a white, scared face. His lips trembled as he looked at me. Neither of us spoke. Then he turned and fled down the stairs. I knew what that meant. I rather envied him, for I felt too low to even want to revive my spirits. I didn't want the brandy, my last resource for blues, which I never employ till tobacco, the Fan Dance, and memories of night's *mixta mero* have all been tried and failed.

I strode back to the window. The sun had set. A dreary cloud of dust went swirling up a gorge in the roofs, which I knew was Sixth Avenue, and then with thunder, a flash or two of lightning, and a sharp pelt and patter of rain on the glass, came a wild midsummer storm. And all at once, with a poet's sharpness of vision of things ideal which seldom visits me, I saw the new-mown fields lying for miles beneath the sickly August moon, and the silver ribbon of road, a stretch between them on the hillside, and the couple advancing, and the careless student swinging down to meet them. And now she was dying, and dying hard, I guessed, and tended by a strange doctor, nursed by a strange woman, a freebooter of the fourth estate keeping guard in the hall, and her lord and master far on in drink below stairs, or, perhaps—I hoped with all my heart he had stayed in the hotel. I ground my teeth and cursed, and there

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was a silly selfishness in the pain. I thought what a pretty figure I cut—a robber's lieutenant to the rescue; a nice Friar Tuck sent by Robin Hood, of Park Row, to aid the capture of Front de Bœuf. I felt a bitterness that I never knew before nor since, I am glad to say; for there be cakes and ale, over a life wasted at its beginning, out of which those usurers—pleasure, inertia, self-indulgence—had taken their frightful discount for past, present, and future advances, and thrown me the shabby balance.

The night wore on. The storm increased, and I kept my post by the hall window and watched the dim lines of light that marked the cuttings of the streets and avenues through the mass of brick and mortar beneath, and wondered, doubtingly, being a benighted Pagan, whether it were better for this life to go out as it was going, spotless, at least conventionally, or to endure and be led, as it must be with the guide it had, into that Alsatia beneath and west of me, and live a few jolly years, and then, when beauty faded, cry the "Here goes nothing!" and be picked up by the much-abused of city suicides—the Hoboken coroner.

Two hours had passed when I went back to the door of the room. Some one came out, and through the door I heard her mutter, "The river, the river!" and my heart was glad a moment. For they thought she meant, no doubt, that by which we symbolize death; but I knew better. I

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knew that her mind had wandered back to the great stream of her birth and mine, that its children will speak of in all times and places as "the river." Ah! I pray that the breath of the North King may have somewhat cooled the young brow that went down through the fiery furnace that night; that the chill shine of his green depths may have somewhat soothed the burning of the childish eyes—for she died at midnight in the housekeeper's arms. We could nowhere find her husband. And when she was dead, and I could enter the room, I went and watched by the lovely dead till the gray dawn whitened the streets, and there came a shrimpish, disheveled shape to the door, and looked in, and gibbered and laughed, and swore broken oaths, and fled when I turned to drive him out, and fell a huddled heap in the corner of the hall, and the sun rose and the new day broke.

* * * * *

I hardly saw Tommy Tremaine again until the next winter, when I was standing *entr'acte*, in the lobby of a low theatre that we were suppressing—which is to say, advertising. He wore a very heavy weed; thanked me for my kindness to "me and Daisy," and offered, as proof of his gratitude, an introduction to Miss La Jeune, a member of the troupe. As the one terror of my life then was that Miss La Jeune would recognize in me a friend of her better days, for there are degrees in

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everything, I declined the honor, and Tommy disappeared through the stage door, to be seen no more of me in Gotham.

IV

I had come up from the city on the Troy boat. I had sat on deck far into the night, and listened to the monotonous beat of the paddles, and watched the glare of the huge furnaces along the banks in the darkness; and I had quoted, and heard a number of people quote, as it faded in the distance, "Saw in heaven the lights of London flaming like a dreary dawn." I had done this somewhat for the love of the night, but more for the hate of a cabin berth. I had gone to bed and been wakened in an hour by some children who had gotten up and looked at a clock that had stopped at the hour of seven, and who thought that it was morning.

I had slept another hour, and waked under the vague but rooted conviction, begotten of the heat and noise, that I was in hell. I had poked around the dreary little city of Troy for hours, awaiting the start of the steamboat-train for Saratoga. I had then ridden a steeplechase across country, with nothing between mine and about two hundred other souls and death but some effete rails and sleepers of the D. & H. C. Co., to the summer capital, and I had been ensconced in the high-

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est and smallest room of a very slant-roofed cottage at the outer end of Phila Street.

I had been somewhat worried. It needed all the Fan Dance I could whistle to keep my courage up, for I had heard of a new edict forbidding the piazzas of the great hotels to all but guests; and I, rather fearing, under the most favorable circumstances, my aptitude for fashionable intelligence, had felt quite sure that I couldn't do anything at it in imagination and without sight of the polite world. I had gotten in in plenty of time for the morning concerts, and resolved to know my fate at the smallest possible price of suspense.

I sallied forth at ten o'clock for the hosteleries. As I sauntered down the shady street, a brilliant thought struck me. "There shone one woman, and none but she," who remained to me of my former acquaintances. I hadn't cut off my visits at her house in the city at the smash of the luck of Edenhall, which took place shortly after my advent at the New York bar, and I remembered her having asked me to call, in case of a visit on my part to the Springs that summer, at the Grand Union—an invitation which I had accepted with an ironical overflow of gratitude, which good Mrs. Midas took as *bona fide*, and wheréat she was quite pleased, though a little fearful, I thought, of my taking her at her word. I knew she wouldn't want me if there were people about; for, besides being shabby, I was always frightfully at ease

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with her guests, and if the most distinguished of them was a good talker, I would engross him as coolly as I would some tenant in sufferance of her parlors like myself. I should have respected her wishes ordinarily, but it was a matter of bread and butter, between which and myself I had grown to let nothing stand. So I came and saw her quartered in one of the Union Cottages, conquered her forth to hear Lothian discourse bouffe potpourris on the back piazza; and she, being in a charitable mood, and having a pretty clear day, asked me to lunch, and proffered me a seat in her carriage upon its departure for the races in the afternoon. We got off in fine spirits—Mrs. Midas, a matron of forty odd; a couple of young women under her charge, both pretty and extremely “nice,” but one frivolous; the other extremely soulful, and inclined Mallock- and Lewes-ward, and myself.

Vivian Grey’s soliloquy had been buzzing in my ears for some time that morning: “What want I? A little rascal blood, and a few rascal counters.” And I had blood enough for all intents and purposes. And then what blockheads had secured the counters in this fortune-hunting that I had been fool enough to ignore, heretofore! All this was the result of the soulful young lady’s never having run across a man before who had memory enough to rehash his old book notices for her entertainment.

However, as we breasted Congress Hill, and bowled along Lake Avenue, I began to remember

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the rights and duties of the chaperon, and forthwith tried her commonplace companion with a few personal reminiscences of a ladies' favorite in the theatrical world. She took avidly, and I plied her with such presentable loose ends of Union Square gossip as I had in odd corners of my brain, until we reached the track. I observed with pleasure that my object was bored and pettish during all this. I was not fool enough to think that she was taken with me yet; but I calculated that my thought-shop was well enough stocked to keep her turning over the goods for a while, and if ladies turn over goods long enough, they are likely to buy. But we reached the course; we ascended the stand. I had congratulated myself on saving stage-fare; but when the betting began in the group we joined, I saw it was no Schroon Lake for me that summer. Suddenly my benefactress exclaimed enthusiastically:

"What a little pet!"

"What is it, Mrs. Midas?" I inquired: "A dear little mid, or a white duck of a Cuban?"

"Hush," in an undertone; "there are two of them here. I mean that jockey, of course."

"The colors come, the colors go," I quoted: "Do you remember that, Miss Minturn?"

"Quick, quick, *currente calamo*—

Which jockey, may I ask? There be jockeys and jockeys, and one jockey differeth——"

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"Be still—the red and white jacket."

I glanced across the track. Tommy Tremaine had indeed struck the most becoming costume I ever saw him wear, in his neat cords and tops and silk blouse of white and scarlet, out of which peeped the elfish little face, made more elfish by the tight cap, with the enormous vizor folded flat back and sticking up against his skull. He was talking intently with a huge negro, evidently an authority in Tommy's stable; for he was apparently giving directions, and sweeping the field with a trained eye, indicating, meanwhile, different points on the track with a large, slablike hand to my young friend and fellow-townsmen.

"I know that jockey, Mrs. Midas," said I, mirthfully; "shall I call him over?"

She held up both her hands in deprecation; but I little heeded her, and thought: Here's a nice psychologic study for my advanced friend. I'll tell her that story if I get a chance, modestly concealing my own part in it.

It was a hurdle-race that Tommy was entered for. I saw him mount a magnificent gray—a famous name of a famous stable—and I thought, even he has passed me—and soon, after a little scoring, they got off. A thick clump of horse and man, at the start, like the splendid charge of some gay-uniformed irregulars—then the storming rush for the first hurdle and the usual man down, the howl of the crowd,—down the second

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quarter, the ranks of the light brigade were broken, and I saw my protégé do me honor, as he carried his gray thunderingly to the front, and hugged the rails after the second jump to economize all the space he could and keep out of the route in case of a fall.

We see little of the beginning of the second half; but now, at the end of the stretch, a rainbow shoots across the track as the four who are left out of all the starters swing in for the finish. A splinter of light wood at the far hurdle, but no fall. The runners' heads rise a moment, their tails fly up, then a soar, and down they come again to solid work on the flat—almost in, and but one more jump, nearly abreast of us. They are quite here now. It is no longer an undulating sea of color, but a series of quick flashes. We can hear the plying whips, the panting breath of the horses, the guttural oaths. The hoof-beats are distinct now—no longer a light thunder. In a rain of light mud above their heads, they take, all four together, the last leap. Perhaps the committee had never calculated for four winners; perhaps Tommy steered wild; perhaps his neighbors did; perhaps there was foul play; but, as they rose in air, I saw the knee of the rider next him strike fairly behind his as he bent forward over his horse's head, and in an instant he pitched out of his seat, stood a moment on his head upon the track, and then lay dead on the Saratoga race-course of a

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broken neck—and the race swept by; only the splendid creature that had so well carried him stopped, as if turned to stone, stood there with heaving flanks and smoking sides, looked down at him and then at the crowd, and whinnied appealingly.

Perhaps there was the soul of a horse somewhere in my hero. Perhaps in some confab in the stables, in some rib-pounding moment before the mount, in some time of fierce joy or sorrow, when long leaders or far followers out there at the half-mile post; perhaps in the wild hate and longing of a hard finish, their hearts had gone out to each other and met, and that which was left sorrowed for that which was taken. If so, it was the redeeming point in the life of Tommy Tremaine.

A Clito to the Ring



IN the State Medical Society they called him a political doctor and a

**The Friend's
Story
to the Young
Reporter**

newspaper doctor, and, unlike most of his class, he was not ashamed of these titles. The associations which they represented had served him well, and albeit he was a skilful and perfectly "regular" practitioner he never let any "ethical" considerations cause him to disown those to whom he had owed his rise.

The politicians had made him a coroner of the city, a surgeon-general of the State, and finally, when he was at the height of his popularity, had bestowed upon him the at-that-time luscious plum of the port physicianship. For all these offices he had been recommended by one or more of the newspapers because of his keen and delicate sympathy with them in "running out" the kind of news which everybody likes to read about somebody else and nobody likes to have published about himself or his friends. The politicians had in all these cases "taken him up," because they were thereby enabled to take some one else up on the same ticket or in the same bunch of nomina-

tions whom they would otherwise have been compelled to set down. In his bluff, jolly way Dr. Parham had thus thriven and waxed fat by making himself useful to the two great forces of modern American life, and he was known on Park Row as the Friend to the Newspaperman. This title was one which the doctor had first bestowed upon himself, and used it with more or less effect on every new young man who was sent to him for the solution of some problem in life or death which Park Row was anxious to lay before its two million readers a week, or 316,237½ readers a day. Some of the elder young men—it is strange how that ingrate fourth estate is always laughing at its benefactors—had caught the phrase up and capitalized the initial letters, till “Doctor, how’s the Friend?” became a tiresome salutation, and the jolly doctor began to think that “the boys” were making game of him. Still he never failed once in his unctuous treatment of new young men, and as he sat one night not long ago in the back office of his pleasant English basement house on Thirty-third Street, his jolly, round voice rolled out a sonorous welcome to a slim new young man whom he had never seen before.

“From the *Expounder*, eh? Come in. I’m glad to see you. Never mind your card; I don’t care about your name. Bless my soul, I can tell a newspaper man when I see him. I’m a F——” He saw the shadow of a smile flit across the young

man's face, and a deeper flush than the terrapin and extra dry of thirty years could paint swept like a wave for an instant across the close-shaven roots of his stiff iron gray beard. "Who's city editor of the *Expounder* now?" he went on. "Plimsol? Gad! I've known him since he first got into the business. Many's the story I've given Plimsol. But what can I do for you? Have a cigar? No? Well, smoke those beastly little paper things if you want to. It makes work for my trade. Gad! I wish there'd been so much cigarette smoking when I was coroner. I always was before my time. But fire away. Anything I know I'll tell you. I always trust newspaper men—discreet ones. Never had one betray me—best confidant in the world. If they can't publish a thing, they won't talk about it. Afraid some other fellow'll get onto it."

The Young Man who had been glancing furtively at the clock in some fear lest the evening should slip away in the course of the jolly doctor's voluble flow of comment, hastened to unfold the object of his visit. It was the *Expounder's* purpose, he said, to print a series of romances of real life, "inside facts" of old, half-understood crimes, only enough of which had been brought to light to serve the purpose of conviction or acquittal in the courts; explanations of mysteries which had never been printed because no statutory crime had ever been proven; stories which had to be hushed up

when they were "news," but now might be used as "special articles." "As to the use of real names," he concluded, "I'll leave that to your discretion if you'll give me a good story, and Mr. Plimsol thought that Dr. Parham ought to have a mine of them."

The Friend had dropped the dragnet of recollection into the deep sea of memory long before the Young Man had completed his narrative. "Let me think," he said in explanation of the silence with which he greeted the end of the Young Man's monologue. "I know just what you want—just what." He strode thrice ponderously up and down his office, then stood looking down upon his seated visitor as if taking a mental measurement of his bump of discretion, and then said importantly: "I'll give you a story—an inside story of the Old Ring," he said—"but no names; mind you, no names."

The Young Man's eyes flashed with delight. Here was what Park Row denominated "meat." It was just what he had hoped, yet hardly dared to hope, for Everybody knew that the Friend knew all about the Old Ring. He had got into politics through having at one time successfully treated the Boss when the family physician of that great man was away from the city, within whose pestilential summer confines his unselfish supervision of Public Works had kept the Boss. The Friend had been the Dr. Jenkins of the Boss's prime min-

ister, his Duke de Mora. He had cobbled up his constitution to make it stand the strain of his pleasures until, like the Duke de Mora's or that of the One Hoss Shay, it had gone to pieces all at once, and thereby saved ultimate worry for Warden Brush. But any well-trained Young Man would have considered it unprofessional and unprofitable to have sounded the Friend on those old stories, for it was supposed that the Doctor, like many others, had "ratted" when the Ring was a sinking ship. Like a delighted child who is promised some extraordinary Christmas toy, some marvel of cunning workmanship, at which in the centre of a shop window it has gazed with timid eye of awestruck desire, the Young Man could only gurgles:

"Oh, Doctor, will you?"

* * * * *

"In those days," said the Friend, sinking his jolly round voice to a rumble, "to oppose the Boss was death. Actual death to the precinct worker who, if he grew rebellious or leaky, was trapped into a barroom row in which he, the aggressor, was slain in 'self-defence'; political death to the too ambitious Assembly district leader who sought to make a company of free lances of the henchmen committed to his care and join in spurious 'citizens' movements'; civil death to the greedy plunderer who 'stood out' for more than his proper share, and was promptly brought up and railroaded

to Sing Sing for some one of his other numerous offences, and social death to those whom the Ring could only reach by calumny. You have heard, doubtless, some traditions of how they used to put people out of the way—heard how one woman of a certain class was sent to the penitentiary for turning the laughter of a room full of revellers on the personal appearance of the most insignificantly repulsive-looking of the Ring—heard perhaps of the poor devil of a stenographer whom many lawyers give work to now out of pity for the term he served in prison for a felony which he never committed, but which was sworn on him before a Ring judge because a Ring alderman wanted his wife and she wanted a statutory ground for divorce. Such was the fate of those who opposed the Boss, and at the time of which I speak the man of whom I am going to tell you was opposing him pretty successfully.

“You would not know his name if I told it to you. He was an early, single-handed reformer, and was lost to sight long before the Seventy were heard of.

“Call him what you will. Call him Beekman if you want to. That’s an old New York family name and he belonged to an old New York family. He was a lawyer, young as lawyers are called young, under forty, married, with children, and was running for a county office. Newspapers, even those outside of the subsidized lot, didn’t

make much of city politics then. They were saving the nation, or rather reconstructing it. They had saved it. If they had been paying much attention Beekman would have started the reform ball rolling a good three years before it was started. He had been given the nomination by the Republicans because he was in good practice and could stand a big assessment which they used to get out the hayseed vote for their State ticket. Then they let him hoe his own row, and, by Jove, he hoed it! He had got hold of some of the facts which the newspapers printed afterward. He was loaded up to the neck with figures on the cost of municipal government elsewhere. He would send invitations up here into the brown-stone district asking the people, all of whom he knew, to hear him in Chickering Hall. When he got them there he'd single 'em out by name, describe the condition of the street in front of a man's house to him, ask him to describe the condition of the street in front of the house he lived in in Paris during the Exposition (of 1867), and then he would say: 'Baron Haussmann gives them those streets for so much per year, and you pay so much for your gutters and kennels.'

"He would go down in the tenement-house districts and string the people about their devotion to the Boss, who was 'good to the poor.' 'Why,' he'd say, 'he's only spending your money. He's giving you work up there in Harlem on the new

sewers and water mains for the use of the squatters and the goats, and where does the money come from? Why, its put right on your rent.' Then he'd tell them that a poor man had to pay less for a six-room house in London than he paid for a sixth-floor closet here, and he'd show them how the taxes made the difference.

"They paid no attention to him at first. Then they tried their stale old trick of breaking up his tenement-district meetings. Then when that wouldn't work they very unfortunately allowed some roughs who ached for glory to try and 'do him up'—that is to say, beat him badly enough to scare him—one night while he was going through Elizabeth Street. But he had a hired body-guard of his own roughs, and that only worked well enough to get some newspaper mention and draw more people to his meetings. Then they went to Arthur and Tom Murphy to try and get them to call him off, but while they said they'd do what they could in order to avoid stirring up any reprisals toward the federal Administration, I guess the General had a quiet laugh, for the General was a gentleman himself and liked to see a gentleman win. They were at their wits' end. They had spies among his servants. His managing clerk was a spy, but they couldn't get anything on him. He had no public record. As for his private life, he'd been gay as a bachelor and had not married early, but if there were any trace of his footsteps

in the grounds marked 'no trespassing' he had been clever enough to cover them up. He was too good a lawyer to be betrayed into any breach of the libel or slander law which wouldn't make them ridiculous if they took notice of it. They couldn't get him drunk, for he never drank outside of a private house or club. They couldn't get him into bad company, for he never kept it. The only thing that gave them the beginning of ground to work on was the fact that his wife was very much averse to his going into politics and that her prolonged stay away from town was due to a difference between them on that account. Then they hit on a plan. You may have seen it in plays, novels—not often in real life.

"By the way," said the Friend, dropping out of his intense if somewhat slangy style of narration into the casually colloquial, "the nearest I ever came to telling this story before was to Wilson Barrett. Strange, wasn't it? But when I met him, after seeing his Clito, I couldn't help saying: 'Mr. Barrett, you must have visited New York for your characters and your plot. It's all been done here—off the boards.'"

* * * * *

The sonorous rumble had sunk lower in the Friend's throat as he talked, till at last it sounded like the noise of a train at the very far end of a very long tunnel. The Friend rose from his seat, unlocked a cabinet in the lower half of his book-

case and produced a decanter and two tiny glasses. He filled them both with that old French champagne brandy which you never find outside the cabinet of the connoisseur—the kind which age has mellowed as it mellows a kind man, melting every asperity in the oil of gladness, till at last its life is only lived to give pleasure to others. The young man did not look at his glass. In the intensity of his interest he never took his eyes off the lips of the Friend. He watched them as a boy watches the curtain before the dressing-room tent when the circus band strikes up the first bar for the “grand entrée.” After the mellow liquid had slipped down, the voice of the Friend began booming nearer, as the surf booms nearer to one walking in the morning toward a rocky coast.

* * * * *

“On the night of November 1st, 186—,” continued the Friend, “or rather in the morning of November 2d, for it was at least two hours after midnight, I was called in a professional capacity to the house of Helen Mowatt. I at first thought there was a mistake, for I had known her to occupy apartments on Twenty-eighth Street. This call was to a number in Varick Street, which I recognized as one of a square which was, though very old-fashioned and rather cheap, still respectable; a neighborhood where a few old New Yorkers still lived for old time’s sake or straitened means. I was not very anxious to obey the call. I knew the

woman. She was one of the Ring women. She was no better perhaps in kind than any of the other Ring women—Mansfield, for instance—but she differed most essentially in degree. They were afraid of her. She had the airs of a duchess and the breeding of a lady. She cowed them. In her house they were more decorous than they were in their own homes. Doubtless she taught most of them manners to take to their own homes. They would have sooner played their high jinks on the steps of the City Hall than they would have in her presence. She despised them. They hated her. Their ways would not have crossed had not there been once in the Ring a gentleman who leaked to Helen Mowatt. He died, and she lived on the leak.

“They got their money’s worth by visiting her house and trying to insult her. They never succeeded. She froze their words on their lips. So they called her a dangerous woman and prayed for her death. She was not so immoderate in her demands that her death was worth hastening. I repeat I was not very anxious to obey the summons on account of her reputation as a dangerous woman. However, I entered the cab she had sent for me, and the driver drove like mad.

“When I entered the door of the Varick-Street house,” said the Friend, looking intently at the Young Man, while his voice rumbled almost out of the far end of the tunnel, “Helen Mowatt was

madly chafing the hands between her own of a man who lay at full length upon the lounge, and calling him softly by name. She stood at one side as I put my ear to his shirt bosom, for they had opened his coat and waistcoat.

"The man was Finley Beekman. He was dead.

"Not a word had been spoken between me and the woman and the third living person in the room whom I recognized as I rose from the body as Beekman's principal personal adherent, his bottleholder in the political fight just closing. As I rose from the body they both broke out at once. She cried as she walked the floor, with her hair down her back, limping, I remember, for she had lost one of her high-heeled slippers as she knelt by his side. 'My God, my God, I tried to save him and I killed him!'

"The man cried with a curse, 'It's a poor proof of your penitence that you bring that man here'; and to me, 'Well, sir, your party will have the Comptrollership. You have done your man.'

"I paid no attention to the insult. It was a sharp blow to Finley Beekman's friend. It meant a good deal more than the loss of an office, unless some way out could be devised. I turned to where Helen Mowatt stood wringing her hands in the shabby old parlor, with its hair-cloth furniture, its faded Brussels carpet, in which great rivers of dirty white meandered through fields of once vivid scarlet, and its war-time prints of Lincoln and his

family, Grant and his generals, and a lithograph of Fernando Wood on the walls.

"I said: 'Helen, how did you kill him, and what the deuce are you doing in this queer neighborhood, anyhow?'"

"She did not seem to hear me at first. She had bent beside the dead man again, and his friend rose to his feet with another oath, for she pressed a kiss on his cold forehead, and fumbled with his limp hand. 'Perhaps it has saved me much,' she said, as if talking to herself. 'He would never have loved me, anyway.'

"Then, as I repeated the question, she burst into a flood of tears, and, as her story went brokenly on, the damnable plot came out. 'They took this house for me,' she sobbed, 'and they wanted me to get him here and keep him through the night till their police should come in and take us both to the station house. But I wouldn't do that—the curs. They had not money enough in all the city banks to make me stand the disgrace of an arrest. Besides, I found—it was six weeks ago that this began—that when he came he never would stay late enough for that. And so it was arranged that one of their thugs should meet him at the door when he went out, and—and—there should be a fight, and their policemen should come up and arrest them both, and their newspapers should publish the fact that he was arrested while coming out of my house, and that—that would ruin him.'

“‘He was your——?’ I asked inquiringly, for it was necessary for me to know all about the cause of death in order to act intelligently.

“The woman rose from her place by the dead man’s side and limped on her one high-heeled shoe across the floor to where an old-fashioned Bible stood upon the rickety-legged, marble-topped table. She laid her hand upon it and answered me. ‘As God is my judge,’ she said,—‘I am a wicked woman, but He must judge me. As God is my judge, he was the only friend I ever had in this wide city—the only man I ever knew who was not a beast—to whom I was not prey.’

“‘You speak truth for once,’ said the man bitterly. ‘If he had once suspected what you were he’d have seen through their game.’

“The woman bowed her head beneath the insult; and I marvelled at the more than devilish subtlety of their plot. In this hard fight of his the only joint in all his armor was the lack of a woman’s sympathy which his recreant wife should have supplied; and through it they would have stabbed him to the heart had not death forestalled them. ‘But what killed him, then?’ I asked, for I had all along been under the impression that the man’s heart had stopped from some stress of brute passion. She again broke out sobbing. God! how old she had grown in that night. How her hair was tossed, her face red. How hollow her cheeks were. How sunken her eyes. A ‘heap

of abject and bedraggled flesh ' indeed. If Finley Beekman could have seen her then!

" ' To-night,' she said, ' I could stand it no longer. Ah! he was so kind, so pleasant. I had gone to him as a client under an assumed name. I had asked him to call. " If I can come at midnight," he said, with a laugh, " after my meetings are over." And then I despised him. I thought, " What an easy victory." It is the old story, only the beast this time is the prey. But I soon found the difference. He came here, tired, worn out. I would have a pint of wine for him, and a mouthful to eat, and it was a part of the plan that the piano should annoy the neighbors. I used to play for him, and we would talk about the different places we had heard the different masters, and he would brighten up and go away rested. He said he could not sleep before he had that little rest. Ah! curse them!' she cried, regaining her slipper and standing erect and majestic while she smoothed her loose flying hair. ' Curse them, he fought them all the harder this last month of it for me, and I'd have helped him win, and he would have won, and he never would have looked upon my face again. But when I told him to-night, when I came crawling to him like a dog, knowing it deserves a beating, and told him that they would do it to-morrow night for a " last card," they call it—two days before election—so that he would have no time to answer, he raised his hand. I thought

that he would strike me. I bowed my head to take the blow. I heard him groan, and when I looked up his eyes were rolling and he could not speak. "Say you forgive me; say you forgive me," I cried, for I thought it was an awful fit of passion which these quiet men will have sometimes. And oh, thank God, he smiled before he died!

"Her voice sank to a hoarse whisper, and she fell in a faint on Finley Beekman's body.

"The man, his friend, sneered as I took measures to revive her, and as she came gasping to, he said harshly: 'A long and dramatic recital, ma'am, but it hardly helps matters. You sent for me, his friend. You sent for this gentleman, one of his enemies. It is as well, perhaps. We can settle things now. Tell me, sir,' he said, turning to me, 'does the enmity of your party go beyond the grave? Will you be satisfied with this man's life, or do you still want his reputation?'

"I lost my patience then. 'If you insinuate,' I said, 'that I had art or part in this infernal plot, you lie. To show you how you lie, I stand ready to risk my standing as a physician, which is my livelihood, to save the reputation of this man, to whom I never spoke, or rather the feelings of his family—ay, and your own reputation—for how do I know how you came into this woman's house?'

The Friend's ruddy face grew white, and the rumble fled so far away that the Young Man bent

his head to listen. "We put the dead man's overcoat on his back; we pulled his hat over his eyes; we left the woman lying lifeless on the floor; we talked to him going down the steps to the cab, and said the air would do him good. We sat beside him as we drove to his house; we talked to him again as we dragged him up its steps. The housemaid found him sitting dead in the hall chair in the morning, with one leg crossed over the knee of the other and his right hand on his rubber overshoe, which he had taken half off. The hall gas jet was flaring over his head."

* * * * *

The Friend breathed a long sigh of relief as he finished, and then the rumble of his voice came cheerily out of the tunnel. "You see," he said, "his friend saw the family physician and I saw the Coroner, and as the autopsy showed he died of plain heart disease, to which he was subject, it was laid to the excitement of his canvass, and his wife, who was heartbroken of course, never knew a thing; but that's why I broke from the Ring. A good story, eh?"

But the Young Man paid no heed. He sat staring at the Friend like a man in a trance, and then gave a little gasp. Then he reached hurriedly for the untouched glass of brandy and hastily gulped it down. "Excuse me," he said—"a little turn—I'm subject to them—but it's all right now—it's hereditary."

"Hereditary?" said the Friend. "How strange."

The Young Man smiled and handed him the rejected card, which had lain on the table throughout the story. "You would not look at it before," he said. "If you had——"

JAMES FRANKLIN RUDDEROW

the card read, and it dropped from the Friend's nerveless hand.

"It would have been Jr.," said the Young Man softly, "if it had not been for that plot of the Ring. Thank you for what you did. Good-night."

The Case of Barbara Babarant

CHAPTER I



MIDWINTER day of the early eighties was rapidly becoming a *dies* ^{In Which a Man's Love was Tried.}

non in Part I. of the General Sessions.

There was light yet in plenty on slushy Broadway, and the streams that trickled across the concrete paths of the City Hall Park from the melting snowbanks on either side had not yet begun to be fixed in slippery rigidity by the chill which comes with the withdrawal of the sun to the neighborhood of the Jersey City ferries. But day dies early in the General Sessions. Not so much on account of the dirt on the windows of the old brown-stone box as on account of what day manages, despite the dirt, to see within them. Sometimes, no doubt, day—being, according to the classics, a god and a gentleman, with the best claims to membership in the Horse Show Association—swears a solemn oath never to look upon the General Sessions again.

And this, if ever there was one, was one of those

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days. Within and without the bar, the square grimy room was crowded from the wire lattice work of the prisoner's pen to the bench on which beside the learned Recorder sat an eminent penologist and a reverend divine, each eager to learn, from no personal curiosity, but in the interest of science and morality, if New York had really grown so wicked as the newspaper reports of the Barbara Babarant case had made out.

A dapper young assistant district attorney had opened the case in language concerning the defendant—a consumptive-looking middle-aged woman with a cheap Sixth Avenue *chic* about her—that is only tolerated in criminal courts, though it may be heard in bagnios. There would have been more language, and worse of it, had not the dapper young assistant district attorney had an unusually early engagement to dinner. Then he called the name of the girl—the prosecuting witness, the ward of the Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty, which had been on all men's tongues outside their family circles for a month —“Barbara Babarant.”

There was a pause for a few moments, during which the morbid mob within and without the bar moistened their dry lips for the morsel that was coming. Then there was the usual shuffling of feet about the court-room door when the court officers have to push aside a *cause célèbre* crowd sufficiently to let the door swing on its hinges.

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The girl entered in charge of a Society detective. Then the door opened again.

The learned Recorder announced: "The next court officer that admits the next spectator will be suspended for the next six months."

"The old gentleman must belong *ex-officio* to a Board of Journeymen Barbers," whispered a member of the junior bar to his neighbor.

The girl passed around the witness' walk at the rear of the jury box. The person for whom the door had opened a second time, and who, to do him justice, was a young lawyer who had been only anxious to see the learned Recorder concerning a client's bail, followed in her wake to the bar. He turned aside there and shared a seat with a brother of the long robe just as the witness took the daisied chair which the State of New York has substituted for the time-honored but tedious "stand."

Day lingered at Barbara Babarant's back and framed her in yellow sunshine through both the grimy windows at the northwest corner of the General Sessions. She was cheaply dressed. Apparently the woman at the defendant's table, from whom her callous General Sessions' counsel edged away as Barbara's story went on, had kept most of the proceeds of the various sales of the girl whom she had brought into the market. Yet neither the palpable plushiness of the sealskin with which her short jacket was trimmed nor the plainly farm-

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yard origin of the long ostrich feather which decked the Gainsborough hat she wore according to the fashion of the time, could either veil or vulgarize the real and singular beauty of her face. Its pallor was marked, and though a first glance might have ascribed this to either fright or shame or a gaslight life, a second glance showed that Barbara Babarant had a rare, transparent, really alabaster skin, whose translucency was due not to anæmia, but fineness of texture. It was like the skin of a Malaga grape. The fall of the shredded velvet of the girl's long black lashes upon the gleaming white of such a skin was a lover's ecstasy and a painter's despair. Barbara's nose was long and high, with fine, thin nostrils. Her lips were full and red, and the color seemed to shine through the transparent skin, just as the colorlessness gleamed through her cheek. Her face would have been oval in shape, but the marketwoman who faced the jury for the purveying of Barbara had spoiled the contour with a square-cut fringe, a "bang" of her glossy black hair.

The young lawyer who had come in after her watched her with no great interest at first. The face was that of a hackneyed "madonna" type, of which the world at large has long grown tired, he thought. Then he began to realize that the type had grown conventional because of its rare beauty. Barbara Babarant's face grew to be a fact where it had been but an impression. A confused re-

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membrance of sensuous Hebrew poetry—of the hot rhapsodies of the Song of Solomon—sang in his ears.

Then he was recalled from analytical processes by the sound of her words. The reporters had laid aside their pencils for the excellent reason that nothing of Barbara's experiences while under the tutelage of the marketwoman was possible of print. The faces of the learned penologist and the reverend divine on the bench were flushed with embarrassment. The learned Recorder pored over his notes. The dapper young district attorney lowered his voice when he asked Barbara a question, as if his office were a confessorship and Barbara's revelations too sickening for the general ear of mankind. The jury fidgeted and looked at each other. The defendant's counsel edged further away from his marketwoman client. Meantime Barbara's voice flowed monotonously on, telling without shake or quaver all that she knew, which was pretty nearly all that could be known, about what happens when a marketwoman of the Tenderloin consigns such a dainty invoice as she to the marketmen thereof. It was as calm as a girlish recital of a week's routine at boarding-school.

As she finished, day fled, dimming the white and red of Barbara's marvellous face with a dusky wash of twilight and calling the eye in silhouette to the precociously graceful lines and curves of her waist and bust.

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"Adjourn the court," said the learned Recorder. "Gentlemen of the jury, you will observe the statutory admonition not to talk of the case. Ah," to the young lawyer who had unwittingly followed Barbara into the room and had now approached the bench, "you seem to be interested in the Babarant case." The young man, in fact, though he had meant to address the learned Recorder in his client's behalf, was watching the girl as she gracefully threaded her way through the crowd in following the detective.

"I beg your Honor's pardon," said he, "but it seems like witchcraft." He was wondering, as he spoke, if it might not be that the harried soul of some long dead high priestess of the Paphos had found refuge in the fair body of the girl after having expelled its proper occupant.

"Tush," said the wise old judge. "The girl is too young to know what she has done or what she is saying. Doubtless Mr. Gerry's people may make a woman of her yet. Well, sir, about your man in the Tombs?"

Next afternoon the young lawyer read that the marketwoman had been convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, while Barbara had been intrusted permanently to the care of the Children's Society. Next day he forgot all about her.

CHAPTER II

ROBERT CLENDENNIN sat at his door and looked ruefully toward the smoky tops of the Big Horn Mountains. His front yard was apparently the county of Johnson, or the State of Wyoming for that matter, and he was a cattle king. He felt, however, at that moment strongly in the mood of exchanging his kingdom for a very small principality in what had been the West when he first went there from the Atlantic seaboard, though it now seemed to him as far East as the Orient, out of which the ships of his dim-remembered boyhood days came sailing to the "long wharf" of his native town.

"It was the rustlers last year and it's the drought this year," he said. "Next year what? An earthquake, perhaps, or having been branded as a murderer for defending my own property I may at any time be summarily executed as one—from behind a tree. Shall we go east, Kate?" he said, turning to his daughter, who sat beside him with her eyes also bent westward across the sun-parched plain and foothills to the smoky tops of the Big Horn. The girl addressed crossed her hands upon her knee and answered: "Why not go back where we came from? I used to like it there, and it always would seem as if I had mother

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for company." She was speaking of the great prairie farm on the banks of the Platte, in the fat lands of Nebraska, where she had played in the fields and waded in the shallows when little more than a child, and which they had left when Robert Clendennin's wife died.

"What! Turn farmer again, with wheat at 50 cents a bushel? Kate, you don't talk like a farmer's daughter," said the ranch owner abruptly. Then he took out a pencil and paper and began figuring on an offer made him by the agent of a thrifty Chicago syndicate, which lived and profited by the maxim that the best bargains are to be had in the worst times.

A clatter of hoofs over the hard-baked earth distracted his attention from his task and broke the reverie of his daughter, whose dreaming glance was still fixed on the mountain-tops.

"Strange what a small world this is," cried a cheery voice as the rider dismounted, and letting his bronco take its own way to the long, low stables, joined the pair at the ranch door.

"Why, there's a first lieutenant over there at Fort McKinney whom I used to go to school with back East, and I remember how envious all we boys were when he was appointed to West Point. And—well, he's a first lieutenant." The speaker laughed, thinking with some self-gratulation that his little "bit" of the cattle range "deals" would doubtless amount to more money than his whilom

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school-fellow had drawn from the Government during all the years that he had served it.

A very good type of the keen men of affairs whom the corporations have drawn to their service out of all the professions, learned and unlearned, soldiering, engineering, law, medicine, and even theology—was Malcolm Ewing. He had Eastern manners and Western methods at his command, could place bonds on Wall Street and price beeves in Wyoming with a careless touch and facility that left the impression in either place that he was a disinterested third party to a contract, who had merely entered into the negotiation to “oblige a friend.” He had ridden over to Fort McKinney ostensibly to present a letter of introduction to one of the officers there from a mutual friend on General Miles’ staff, but had had a sharp eye throughout his journey upon the leanness of Clendennin’s kine.

For all his acuteness, however, Mr. Ewing had spent a most unbusiness-like period of time at the ranch. Cattle kingdoms of thrice the area of Clendennin’s modest one had been merged by him in the cattle empire which his syndicate was planning in a quarter of the time that he had lingered under the shadow of the Big Horn. He had not deceived himself at all as to the cause of his delay. It was the company of Clendennin’s large-eyed, serene, reposeful daughter Katharine that had kept him. Her personality was a new one to him.

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There was a classic amplitude about the girl, or woman rather, that was new to and completely captivated him. If she had been of the mythical "cowgirl" type found in silly season Western newspaper letters, with a rifle at her back and a lariat at her pommel, she would have been an approved *fin-de-siècle* Diana. As it was, with her large lines and generous curves of figure, her unconsciously statuesque poses, her majestic walk, she seemed a Ceres rather than a goddess of earth's increase to whom cattle king and rustler alike might send up prayers for the breaking of the drought about the headwaters of Clear Creek. Mr. Ewing had from the first made up his mind that he was in love with Katharine Clendennin in Wyoming. For a week he had concluded that he would remain in love with her in Chicago or farther East, whither his fancy ever strayed, whenever the exigencies of the source of the covey of panic birds in the recesses of the rookery permitted.

The cattle princess herself was not at all averse, apparently, to his dalliance in her father's domains, and she seemed to know enough of the ways of men to guess the reason of his lingering. Ewing accredited the knowledge to a winter that she had spent with an infantry major's wife at the big military post of Fort Leavenworth, when her father was a grain king in Nebraska. She was not a demonstrative woman. There seemed, in fact, a

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sort of self-repression about her, as if the silence of the prairies and the ranges, where she had spent her life, ever hovered, monitor-like, about her. But she had always seemed well content in his companionship and had quiescently, but apparently gladly, accepted the relation of guide to him through the historic country about them. They had been as far afield as Massacre Hill, where she had pointed out to him the exact spot where Custer's body had been found, the ring of dead Siouxs about him, and the other bold sabremen of the Seventh Cavalry, like the ring of dead English about the Scots king at Flodden. She had shown him, too, the spot whence Sitting Bull had directed that famous fight, and told him all the stories she had heard of old Fort Phil Kearney near by, and again and again had detailed the outlaw doings of the rustlers against whom her father and a score or more of other range rajahs had taken arms the year before, for which they now stood indicted for murder. Then there had been frequent rides into Buffalo, the county seat, for supplies and mail and what not, and through it all Ewing saw with a syndicate agent's clarity of vision that their unity of heart and mind was growing more perfect every day.

Had she seen the same? he had questioned himself as he cantered through the hazy air from the Fort. He was sure that his mind rarely reached a certain conclusion from given premises

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more rapidly than hers. There was an affinity or a similarity of mental construction. It is so that two voyagers steering by the same compass and chart will, though the track of each be unseen by the other, reach the same port at the same time, and find therein gladness and surprise.

But on this point he felt not at all sure. When he and her father had talked of the latter's removal to the East, and she had been consulted, she had laughed and said: "Oh, not farther east than the Missouri River. I couldn't find room enough. Now, father, isn't Cheyenne metropolitan enough for you? They think so there, anyway," or to Ewing, "You know how often you have spoken of how I fitted my ample surroundings."

Whenever he had told her of the life in the great Eastern cities, of the winter season of gayety, of the summer sea and those who make merry upon its sands or hie across its depths to the opulent lands of the Old World, she, whose only notion of the pleasures of what is called "society" had been derived from a garrison hop, would listen as "to a tale of a little meaning, though the words be strong." And yet she knew, Ewing thought, that he must return beyond the Missouri. The intentions of the wildest sharper in the Whiskey trust itself never were so ill revealed to him as those of Miss Katharine Clendennin after a month's acquaintance, during three weeks of

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which his own, as he guessed, must have been quite clear to her.

Supper was ready almost as soon as he joined Clendennin and his daughter at the house door. His host commented grimly on the fact that even antelopes were getting scarce in the Big Horn country as he cut the steak, and Ewing replied, with a sorry attempt at a joke, that his duty would compel him to make himself like the Big Horn antelope in a day or two.

Father and daughter both looked really concerned at his news, and the former said: "Well, Mr. Ewing, I've kept you waiting long enough. I'll give you an answer to-morrow."

He repeated these words as the trio parted for the night, and Ewing, looking not at him, but at the royal poise of his daughter's shapely head upon her splendid shoulders as she went bedward with her lamp, like a sculptor's symbol of Truth or Art or some other attribute of light, muttered between his teeth: "I wish to God that I could be as sure of one from you." He wondered then if the old man had heard him, for he saw the shadow of a new thought cross his face as he looked out into the night upon the points of flame, which, shooting through the smoke banks and the dark, made new fantastic peaks along the summit of the Big Horn Mountains.

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CHAPTER III

IN dayshine, during a time of drought on a Wyoming cattle range, one rides early or not at all, for Northern heats are as fierce while they last as those from which the subtropical portion of humanity seeks refuge in a siesta. So the benediction of the dew was still on the ground next morning when Katharine and Ewing set out on what they both knew would be probably the last of their excursions. The syndicate's agent wanted to observe the forest fires more closely. "Well, Kate's a good enough woodswoman not to let you get too close," her father had said laughingly upon learning of his desire, "otherwise it might not be safe for you. They snook and pounce sometimes, like our old friends the Sioux used to do, and I doubt if those cavalry fellows from the fort have got them properly fenced in, though they've been working hard enough. Forestry is something they don't teach yet at West Point, like many another thing that the subalterns have to learn after they get out here."

Before the pair had journeyed a mile westward toward the Big Horn they met a group of cowboys, who seemed from their interested talk and actions to have something more urgent on hand than the care of the suffering herds.

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The cattle princess hailed the leader among her men-at-arms in a free and at the same time commanding style. "What is it, Mike?" she asked. "Have some of those people mistaken our steers for mavericks?"

The Texan laughed. "No, Miss Kate, they ain't giving us any trouble on that score just now. It's these fires. There's stock been lost in 'em and two lives at least and one man's home, and the boys think that they know who set 'em, an' they're just goin' to ask him whether he did it a-purpose or not."

"And if he did?" said his master's daughter, looking almost menacingly down from her tall Kentucky mare upon the cowboy upon his mustang. The man flourished his quirt and fumbled with the coiled lariat at his saddle-bow in embarrassment.

"Well, Miss Kate," he said, with an awkward effort at a laugh, "one would think you was that rustler sheriff, to question the boys so close."

"Mind you, now, Mike," answered the girl, lifting her riding whip with a gesture of earnestness which made it look in her gauntleted hand like a sword uplifted in the grasp of a cattle-range Joan of Arc, "you know what trouble it would make for my father if you began any of your lawless doings again. Now, you go back to the ranch. If anybody's been setting the woods on fire I'll find out about it and tell the people at the fort."

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Then, as she rode on, with Ewing admiringly at her side, while the cowboys fell back in sulky acquiescence, she said: "They'll wait till I get out of sight and then they'll disobey me. But if a squad is out from the fort fighting the fire, I'll warn them."

"But what," asked Ewing, to whom the incident had only been of interest through his companion's handling of it, "do they propose to do with the gentleman whom they intend to interrogate?"

"To hang him," was the curt answer. "That is if he is a rustler, a cattle thief, as they think he is. They shield their revenge behind lynch law, just as other revenges are shielded behind the laws of courts and legislatures."

"To hang him?" echoed Ewing, with something of a start. "Is it possible!" Perhaps his face paled a little under its coat of tan. It is one of the disadvantages of modern life which offers its rewards only to commercial enterprise that situations are sometimes created where man, accustomed only to the strife of intellects, does not appear at his best before woman. And Ewing had never stood before in one of the inns of the court of Judge Lynch, that mighty magistrate who condemned more people annually to death in the last tenth of the nineteenth century in the great Republic, than all the oyer and terminers in all the forty-five States, to say nothing of the Territories.

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"An estimable set of citizens," he said, regaining his composure. "A rare importation of Southern men and manners."

"There are worse men, I doubt not," replied Katharine gravely, "and you have seen them often enough, very likely, though not at their worst, I hope."

"Some of the monsters of the cities, I suppose," said Ewing laughingly, "who stalk abroad in broad-cloth; or, no, in tweeds and cheviots, according to the style of the modern, naughty novelist from whom you get your conceptions of them."

"I do not read naughty novels, as you call them," said his companion, somewhat icily.

"Pardon me, I know you do not," answered Ewing contritely. "Most women do, but you—one would as soon think of Juno in a morning gown putting in a lazy Olympian day with De Maupassant or Catulle Mendes."

"I am no goddess," answered Katharine somewhat impatiently, "but of the earth earthy, and I think that you get your compliments not out of modern French novels, but ancient English ones."

"You are a goddess," answered Ewing firmly, and not in the tone of badinage which the words would seem to fit. "And this is your mountain, your shrine, your garden, and I am going back to Athens! Well, not exactly—to Chicago." He laughed a mirthless laugh at his own anticlimax, and they rode on.

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"You are not a true Chicagoan," said Miss Clendennin with a laugh. "You compare it to its disadvantage with such a place as Athens, where there was no auditorium, no stock yards, no World's Fair. You have not lived very long in Chicago."

Ewing felt a far Easterner's thrill of pride. He had not, with the ill taste of most "successful" men, favored a woman into whose society he had been much thrown with a complete autobiography. "No, indeed," he said earnestly, "nor shall I stay there longer than I can help; but how did you know?"

Katharine's lips seemed to frame one answer, and then, with a little effort, to unframe it and make another. "Did I not tell you," she answered with somewhat forced gayety, "that it was because you thought your descent from 'your mountain, your shrine, your garden' would be farther to Chicago than to Athens?"

"Well," said Ewing, with a brisk dislocation of the train of talk, "You don't have to go to Chicago. Would you like to go to Athens? We could—I beg your pardon—I mean, Miss Clendennin, are you going to urge your father to go East or stay here?"

Her answer was almost inaudible. Her face was pale and her eyes suffused. Her lips trembled as Ewing bent forward to hear the words, "To stay here."

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"But why?" the man burst out, almost in a rage, lashing his horse with his whip as he did so. The beast bounded into mid-air, and when his master brought him into submission again, he said: "Confound this fidgety brute! I can't talk on his back. Let us dismount."

Katharine demurred at first, said that they must reach the squad from the fort, that they must get home to dinner, that the suspected incendiary would be hanged, that her father would be anxious. But the garrison's guns gave stammering answers. Katharine felt, in truth, not entirely mistress of herself. A line of an old song from "The Princess," to whom Ewing was fond of comparing her, ran through her head. It was:

"Let the great river take me to the main.
Ask me no more."

She alighted, and hardly noticed that Ewing simply threw both bridles over a bush instead of tying or picketing the horses. She hardly ascribed, in fact, the acid pungency of the air she breathed to the proximity they had attained to the fiery mountains. Ewing saw her emotion. It almost awed him. He had seen women soften before and had enjoyed the melting sight, but not such women as this. He took her hand. "Ah, Kate," he said, "why this foolish antipathy? Why do you so hate and dread the East, the cities? Is it because of my company? Do you hold back because I go?"

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Her head was turned away from him. She shook it a little. He saw a deep wave of delicate crimson spread and lose itself in the flossy hair at the nape of her splendid neck. She did not withdraw her hand. He saw her bosom—that of a Caryatid in a riding habit—rise and fall. He put his arm about her waist, and the scent of her hair was in his nostrils as he whispered in her ear: “Say you will go back with me as mine.”

The woman, who was almost in his arms, gave such a gasp of pain that Ewing started, then pressed closer to her. “My God, are you hurt?” he asked.

“Yes; oh, don’t.” There was such an earnest entreaty in her voice, so little of the coy demurrer, the plea which women, like lawyers, set up, with no hope of its prevalence, but simply for the gain of time, that Ewing dropped her hand and retired his arm from its lodgment over the warm beatings of her heart. Then she turned, and he saw with joyful surprise that, whatever might be the cause of her distress, it was no aversion to him. She sobbed, and her full lips quivered, and she held her handkerchief to her eyes, but beyond its border’s film he could see a glance that yearned, that caressed. She raised her hands once as if to extend them to him in a gesture that went out with the look that she could not help but give him. She could restrain the gesture though, and her hands came back to her sides stiffly as a soldier

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on parade. Then she trembled through all her tall stature, and then at last, having conquered her longing to throw herself into Ewing's arms, cast herself prone upon the breast of kindly earth. There she covered her head with her hands and burst into an ecstasy of grief.

Ewing flung himself down at her side and clasped her hand again. She resisted, and her riding glove came off in the struggle. At the sight of the white, firm fingers a drunkenness filled him. He kissed them and fondled them, and all the time said softly, triumphantly: "You love me. You love me, Kate. You know you do. You cannot hide it. Ah, you splendid, stubborn Kate! You cannot, you cannot. Kate, Kate, Kate! I love to say it. I love the name. It is good in my mouth."

While the strong stress of barbaric passion was mastering him, and he rioted in his surrender, the woman was going through the fierce agony of beating down, battling back the same forces which had so conquered him, to which she longed to yield. She could not at first take her hand from his lips. His words in her ears were like sentient, delicious, palpable things. But she released the hand at last, and stretching her neck like a wounded thing that tries to reach away for air and surcease from suffering, cried out sharply as she sat up: "I have not said I love you. You must not make me say it. You shall not." Then,

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woman-like, she got an armistice by arranging her much-rumpled hair, and steadfastly refused to let her hand be captured again. "It is a spell," she thought to herself. "If I can avoid his hand-clasp I may prevail over myself."

Ewing plucked a spear of the dry prairie grass and munched it. He had regained his senses, but he was all the more determined than when in the white heat of his passion. "Will you tell me," he asked slowly and somewhat amusedly, "why I must not make you say you love me when I know you do? And the saying of it would make you as happy as it would me?"

Katharine Clendennin's tempest had subsided in turn to a dull weariness of despair which was almost sullen. "Do not torture me," she said. "It is impossible. That is all." Then a weeping, womanish mood seized her, unlike her tempestuous grief of a moment before, and she hid a cry-baby face in her hands and said: "I am unworthy of you."

"Unworthy!" Ewing's voice startled the grazing horses with a shout of relieved, rollicking, boyish laughter. "You, unworthy! You, Robert Clendennin's daughter! You, the mistress of this range! My Princess! My Cybele! My demi-goddess! You who could be worthy of me if I found you in rags in the foulest of city streets. Unworthy, is that all? Ho! ho! ho!"

His glee was a trifle contagious, perhaps, for

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Katharine Clendennin half smiled as she said, "If you found me in such a place you would love me, then?"

"If I had found you long enough to know how lovable you were, I would."

"If I were nobody's daughter?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And wicked?"

"Oh, yes, if you were terribly wicked."

"Malcolm"—it was the first time she had ever spoken his name, and the first time that he had ever liked to hear it spoken. "Do you know what you have said? If I were nobody's daughter and had been wicked, and you had found me ragged in the street, you would have loved me." Her voice was low and pleading. She seemed a suppliant goddess invoking the pity of mere man. "Yes, dear, yes," said Ewing soothingly. "All that I said is true. I meant it."

There was a light of gladness in her eye, a rosy dawn of hope upon her cheek as she went on, half hanging her head: "I am not Robert Clendennin's daughter. I was a waif sent to him on his Nebraska farm by a charitable society in New York. You might have found me in the streets, in the worst of the bad streets. I am of the streets. Oh, my dear! my dear! it cannot be!"

A great wave of pity blended itself with the strong current of passion that was flowing over

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Ewing's being. He took her, yielding, in his arms, and soothed and petted her and stroked the glossy plaits which were bound up tightly on the crown of her noble head.

"I love you, Kate! I love you," he whispered, "whatever you are, wherever you have been. And this is why you dreaded the East. Poor child, poor child, and who would guess that Kate Clendennin and, what was your other name, were one? You must have been a very famous little person to think that you would be remembered so long."

She had lain back resting on his shoulder after her story was told, in restful content, like a swimmer who reaches the grateful shore when spent in his battle with the waves, and lies and basks in the sun and the cool wash of the water.

"Oh, my name was well enough known for a time at least," she murmured, "and it seemed to shout at me from the bulletin boards of a slanting, crowded street that ran by a park or square where there were great law buildings full of such wretched people. And you, oh, Malcolm! I thought you would know me when you first came to the ranch. I knew you. I always thought you had something to do with my case. You followed me into the court-room, and you spoke to the judge when I was going out, and you had a human face, a kind face. The rest were wolves. Oh, I dream of them in the night sometimes, even yet, and I start in my sleep; for I think I hear some

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man in a shabby blue suit call ' Barbara! Barbara! Babarant! ' ”

She had been running on like a prattling child. Suddenly she stopped. She had felt the arm on which she was glad to rest grow limp and then fall from her waist. It seemed to have been stricken with a death chill. She turned suddenly, “ Malcolm! Malcolm! ” she said. “ Oh, darling, are you ill? Are you stricken? What is it? Speak to me, speak! ”

Her lover's face was working as with a paralytic twitch. His eyes were stony cold and repellent. Stricken he was, indeed. It seemed as if a bolt had descended from the smoky summer skies and stunned him, and that he had walked in another world far, far from the shadow of the Big Horn—far from Clendennin's ranch—farthest of all from Clendennin's queenly daughter. He saw the winter afternoon light fading through the grimy court-room window-panes on that precociously sumptuous figure in the witness-chair, the wolfish gaze of the court-room mob following her gloatingly into the shameful penetralia of her life, the clear, fine face of the Recorder averted from the sight of debased, polluted girlhood; the apologetic looks of the young prosecuting officer toward the jury; the shrinking of the callous General Sessions' lawyer from the prisoner. His head dropped between his hands, and Katharine Clendennin felt through all her own miserable surprise a shock of horror as he

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groaned not in blasphemy, no more, at least, in blasphemy than the same words might have come from a wretched victim on the rack of the Inquisition: "Oh, Christ!"

The woman flung herself at his feet and clasped his knees, gasping. The high linen collar of her habit choked her, and she wrenched it open with her strong white hand. "What do you mean, Malcolm? Look at me. Look in my eyes." She raised his head as she spoke. He let it sink again with a groan. Fool that he had been! Why had he not seen? That thick, fine, glossy hair of midnight black, those liquid eyes like ebony dissolved, the shredded velvet of those lashes, the translucent white of her cheek and red of her lips, the classic bust that more than fulfilled the ready promise of her girlhood. How could he have failed to remember? How could he have thought that there could be two such beings in one world?

There was a note of despair and alarm in her voice as the woman went on to deaf ears: "I told you, and you said you loved me. I said I was of the streets. I said I had been wicked. Why do you hate me? Why have you changed? Was Barbara Babarant any worse than any other waif, any other victim? And I was so young. Oh, Malcolm!" Her sobs stopped her words, she lay prone as Mary Magdalen, and might have thought, had her numb brain been fit for thought, that only

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had one Man forgiven a woman the crime that she had confessed. Still she groped for Ewing's hand like a child in the dark. He did not withdraw it. There was not brute enough in him for that. But its touch was cold and irresponsive. His very soul was being seared with words—her remembered words. They passed before his eyes as if the transcript of the stenographer's minutes had been held up before him in pitiless print. His imagination cruelly grasped and realized them.

At last he rose. "Come," he said, "let us ride back; or no," with a laugh that was altogether joyless, "rather let us die."

Katharine sprang to her feet at the sound of his strange words. She looked for the horses. The wise brutes were gone. They had taken heed. They had noted the flight of crying birds overhead, the scamper now and then of the strange wood-beasts across the plain. They had heard the strange sounds approaching. A muffled trouble of sound, repressed at first to an angry murmur, growing later to a hungry roar, now varied by a sharp crackle, or a short hiss as the fire, traversing the dry range grass, devoured a clump of brush or licked up a pool of stagnant water.

Robert Clendennin had been right. The mountain fire had swooped and pounced upon the plain, and the cavalry fellows had not been able to fence it in.

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"Let us die," echoed Ewing, as if inspired as he looked westward and saw the ranked battalions of the fiery foe sweeping toward them in regular order.

"Die?" answered Katharine sharply. "I die? And my father? Quick, man, your knife." With two slashes of the blade she cut off the long, shot-loaded train of her habit and slashed its confining skirt down the side.

"You will have to take my hand," she said, blushing. "Come on! Run for the creek!"

So through the suffocating, spark-laden air they set out over the slippery earth for the headwaters of the Clear, but a quarter of a mile away.

CHAPTER IV

It was Sergeant Terry of B Troop who had been superintending the efforts of the cavalry fellows to fence in the flames at the mountain's base that morning with cross-fires and earthworks. He had lingered last of all, laboring manfully to extend the narrow line of defence to an efficient width, and after that, like a good soldier, waiting to the last moment to observe most closely the line of the enemy's advance. Then he spurred swiftly northward along the enemy's front before turning east for the haven of Clear Creek. When the narrow slit in the landscape which betokened the location of its banks came into his horizon, he

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gave a little grunt of relief and spared for a time the spur. He lowered his head as much as he could, for the smoke grew oppressive, and galloped on. When he raised his eyes again to see if the slit in the landscape had grown larger, he swore a soft, surprised, cavalry oath to himself. There were others fleeing for the Creek besides himself, and on foot. He rode over a rise and made them out more clearly—a man in riding-boots and a fore-and-aft tourist's cap, instead of a Philadelphia-made Mexican sombrero, such as the cowboys wore, and a woman in a tattered habit running heavily for dear life.

The sergeant's spur sank rowel-deep in the troop-horse's smoking side. "By the powers! I'll save the woman anyway," he muttered, "for, God, there's no one can save the man."

As he spoke he saw one of the figures sink to the earth, saw him rise, make an eager gesture for his companion to leave him, and fall again. Three more leaps of the spurred troop-horse put the sergeant at the side of the woman, who bent over the fallen man. "For the love of heaven, it's Clendennin's daughter!" he cried. "Quick, Miss Kate! Get behind me. See! See!"

Little vedettes of flame had stolen ahead of the great billowy column of devastation and came skirmishing to their very feet. But Kate did not mount.

"Put him over your saddle-bow, sergeant," she

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said rapidly. "Here, let me help. He broke his ankle falling, and fainted when he tried to walk on it. Now, give me hold of your stirrup. It isn't a hundred yards."

A greater burst of flame rose high behind her as he spoke, and Sergeant Terry mechanically crossed himself as he obeyed her directions. He could not have said why then. Afterward he made a rough trooper's analysis of his motive, and found in it a recollection of a picture of a virgin martyr at the stake, which the priest of his native parish in Kildare had once brought home from Rome to grace the little church.

Then his rollicking, racial attitude to imminent danger of death came uppermost. "Hang tight, miss, and we'll make it, though it's a cruel handicapper ye are with all this weight. Now, old boots and saddle, it's march, trot, but don't charge, or the infanthy can't kape up."

And never did the noble old troop-horse break his ordered gait, though the fire behind fairly blistered his haunches and made him snort with pain and terror. And never did the Irish soldier on his back cease with his droll words of encouragement to his overburdened steed and to the breathless, panting woman who clung to his stirrup and reeled rather than ran at his side, with the sparks raining on her streaming hair and the flames snatching at her skirts. Once he felt her hold on the stirrup loosen. He had been watching for

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just such a happening, and seized her arm regardless as to whether the unconscious "tenderfoot," who was slung like a bag of meal across his saddle-bow, stayed or fell, lived or died, burned or froze. Then he gave a glad shout as he saw the deep, cool water.

"We'll win in a walk, Miss Kate! We'll win in a walk. Murder, but you're blazin'!" And leaving the troop-horse to bear Ewing into the creek—if need be drown him there—Sergeant Terry leaped from his saddle and, catching Miss Clendennin by the waist, fairly hurled her in her burning skirts into the smothering, saving waters of the creek.

* * * * *

When life came back to Ewing he was lying on the parched bank of the stream. The sergeant, of whose agency in his rescue he had known nothing, had disappeared in quest of help to bring him to the ranch. Beside him, with her eyes following the retreating flames, and eagerly noting their direction, sat a woman, whom at first he hardly recognized. Her habit and petticoats hung in charred and soaked tatters about her feet. Her face was grimed with smoke. Her hair, the glossy plaits no longer bound tightly on her head, had been bunched up roughly, simply to keep it out of her eyes. Stray locks of it showed signs of singeing. Ewing looked at her before she was aware, and then closed his eyes and racked his

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memory. He had fallen. He had broken or sprained his leg. He felt the pain yet. He had entreated her to leave him, and then there had come a blank, and now she had brought him here safe; somehow, with what peril to herself her dishevelled appearance told. His mind ran back to the other incident, the pain to which he had honestly for a moment preferred death in the advancing flames. It wore a different aspect now. They had been through the fire together. An old song ran in his head, "And as gold must be tried by fire," the first line ran. He opened his eyes and saw her sitting despondently, he thought, with her head upon her hand.

A strange but delightful emotion, in which love, longing, remorse, pity, and gratitude were inextricably mingled, stirred his blood. "Kate, Kate," he whispered hoarsely. She turned quickly with an exclamation of pleasure at his return to consciousness. "You have given me my life, dear," he said, crawling to her, and glad that he had to crawl in his ecstasy of loving contrition, "given me my life and now you——"

She raised her hand in a gesture of restraint and smiled a proud, sad smile. "Yes," she said, "I have given you your life and you must keep it."

Two Little Match Girls



CHRISTMAS came in to Miss Cabell, who lives within the first echo of the chime of St. Rittenhouse, in a much holier manner than she knew. It was just twelve o'clock of Christmas Eve when "Lohengrin" was finished, and so Miss Cabell had seen at the instant of the arrival of the day of the Nativity the departure of the Swan knight for the holy mountain of Montserrat, where in the awful communion over which King Percival presides, Christmas is better kept, doubtless, than even within the first echo of the chimes of St. Rittenhouse.

Nevertheless, Miss Cabell's present recollection of Herr Stritt's apotheosis was that the Academy had been very warm, as the Academy always is, and that the first draught of Christmas air which she breathed on issuing from the dress circle had gone straight to her throat. Therefore, Miss Cabell, who had at least three gentlemen in evening-dress talking to her whenever the weird swan

Christmas
Tale and
Christmas
Truth,
and How
Little Ethel
Wept Over the
Tale

music appeared in the score and sent creepiness up the backs of ordinary people, stayed at home from church Christmas morning and read to little Ethel. Little Ethel, Miss Cabell's youngest sister, was the child of a port-winey old age, and never was well enough to go to church or anywhere else. The child had an *edition de luxe* of Hans Andersen's fairy tales among her countless Christmas gifts, and it was from this that Miss Cabell read as well as her throat permitted. She read the swan story without the slightest perception that its basis was the same beautiful fable as the story of Elsa, the tale of the weaving of the thistle coats for the Swan brothers. She read the marvellous adventures and tragic ending of the chivalric tin soldier, and, though she wanted to stop, little Ethel clamored for more, and so Miss Cabell turned to the story of the little match girl. Miss Cabell's voice, despite her throat, was a very rich contralto, and little Ethel could not have heard the little match girl's story told in a manner more after Hans Andersen's heart than she did as her big sister turned the illuminated pages of the *edition de luxe*. When Miss Cabell turned the last page she heard a sob proceeding from the lounge where little Ethel lay enveloped in the rose-colored afghan, which was also one of her countless Christmas gifts.

"Why, child, what's the matter?" asked Miss Cabell, surprisedly dropping the *edition de luxe*,

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with imminent danger to its covers. A big tear stood on either of little Ethel's hollow cheeks.

"Oh, Georgie," she cried (for Miss Cabell had been christened Georgiana, in order to keep the name of a revolutionary brigadier in a family which had no sons), "is it true? Do you suppose that there ever was a match girl, and she froze to death on Christmas night, and was carried away to see her grandmother by an angel, like that picture?"

"You curious child," said Miss Cabell. "Of course not. Angels don't carry children away, and children don't freeze to death here, though they might in Copenhagen, for it's very cold there, Ethel, and here the little girls in the street are taken care of by the homes and societies and things." Miss Cabell's ideas on the workings of organized charity in Philadelphia were vague. She petted the child and soothed her, and then got up and walked to the window. Fidele, her cocker spaniel, who had been exhausting himself in efforts to snatch a berry from the wreath of holly which hung just above the dado, abandoned his efforts, and leaping into the deep embrasured casement, looked out into the street over Miss Cabell's well-turned shoulder.

* * * * *

Isola Amoretta Crawford, for such was the wealth of names which a shivering little girl who seemed to be all shawl, possessed, turned the cor-

ner of Seventh Street into Bay at half-past two o'clock Christmas afternoon. Mullinses' is on that corner, and as she passed she heard a well-known voice inside. It was thick with hummers and pronounced: "With what wages is and what wages has been, it's a hell of a merry Christmas for the workin' man." Isola Amoretta recognized the voice as paternal, and fled. She dodged the fall of a drunken negress who had started out of a little house with a growler in her hand. The fall of the growler made a tremendous racket in Bay Street. It was an earthenware growler.

"Mom," said Isola Amoretta, as she climbed the stairs of the house next to that out of which the negro woman had fallen, and reached a room into which the Christmas weather filtered joyously through three broken panes out of six and a vacancy of plaster in the ceiling, which showed that the roof was principally constructed of laths, "mom, pap's drunk at Mullinses', and Caroline's drunk next door." The woman who lay under a shawl (why do the minds of the poor so run to shawls as a means of protection from the cold?) on the straw bed in the corner made no answer. The fact that pap was drunk at Mullinses' and Caroline was drunk next door was rather too commonplace for comment. "Mom," said Isola Amoretta, taking off her shawl and putting it over her mother's shawl on the bed, "I ain't sold but six boxes."

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The woman under the two shawls looked up rather alarmedly from under her frouze of unkempt hair. "Your pop* will want more'n ten cents when he comes in, Isoly," she said, weariedly.

"Mom," said Isola Amoretta, "when I came around the corner out of the big square where the church is an' the cars turn down—the band used to play there last summer—I seen a big young lady in a window lookin' out and a dog lookin' over her shoulder."

The woman under the shawls paid no particular attention to the narrative. "Mom," continued Isola Amoretta, "do you s'pose her pap gets drunk on Christmas?"

"A good many folks get drunk on Christmas, Isoly, beside your pap," answered the woman under the shawl sententiously.

"Well, do you suppose, mom," asked Isola Amoretta, "that she has pie for Christmas?"

The woman under the shawls laughed. "Pie and lots of other good things, Isoly."

"Mom," said Isola Amoretta contemplatively, "I wish I was the dog."

The woman under the shawls wasted no time in reply to this expression of desire. When silence was broken again it was Isola Amoretta who spoke. "Mom," she said, "I suppose pop would break things if I spent fi' cents for kindlin' wood."

"I s'pose he would, Isoly," said the woman under the shawls.

"Then, mom," said Isola Amoretta, "I guess I'll get to bed with you to keep warm."

"That's the reason why I came here, Isoly," said the woman under the shawls. The two slept.

* * * * *

Mullins turned pap out at six o'clock. Pap's money was gone. Mullins said that pap was drunk and he couldn't have his Christmas custom interfered with, for when pap was drunk he was quarrelsome.

"Mom," said Isola Amoretta, waking and feeling that only the Christmas wind, and not the Christmas sunshine, came through the broken panes, "I think pap's comin'?" It was evident that pap was comin'. It was only a question as to whether the stairs would bear him out to come the whole way. When pap had ascertained through the medium of a vast amount of Bay Street vernacular, mostly profane, that Isola Amoretta had only sold six boxes, he said, "—— my —— soul, if you ain't the ——est worthlessest child I ever seen. Here it is Christmas night and half the ducks in the street will be full o' rum and money, an' you can ketch dollars as well as cents for your —— matches —— Git!"

The woman under the shawls arose from the bed and threw one of the coverings after the child in the street where the vigor of pap's emphasis of his "git" had propelled her.

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Caroline, who was drunk next door, had got another growler by the time that Isola Amoretta passed out of the house in her shivering way up-town.

"Ye ain't had no supper, chile," she said quite thickly, seeing the ragged little girl going by. "Put one into ye." She held out the growler, and Isola Amoretta, knowing of its contents that at least they held a little warmth, drank and went her way. It was shocking, but the poor must be clothed and fed somehow. And the poor found out long ago that liquor will clothe and feed them for the nonce.

* * * * *

Isola Amoretta sat on a step near the entrance of one of the big hotels through the earlier part of the evening. Isola Amoretta had a particularly disagreeable whine, and this fact, coupled with the knowledge on the part of the public, conveyed to them through the newspapers, that all children who are engaged on the street at night in selling papers, matches, and buttons are rank impostors, who live in luxury on the charity of the world, had made her vigil a comparatively profitless one. It was as cold as it was profitless. If Isola Amoretta had had stockings or underclothes—a sitting on a stone step on a December night for three hours might not have been so bad. But she had none. Her eyes had stopped watering from the cold

early in the evening. She thought herself that the water was frozen; but her fingers were numb—ah, so numb!—and that was bad, for she fumbled with the change for the second box she sold, and so got roundly cursed for a thief by a gentleman who repented him of his charity as soon as he saw this conclusive proof of the truth of the stories he had heard of the utter depravity of street children. Isola Amoretta's ten toes ached with the cold. It was no good to stamp them. They felt then as if they were breaking off, and that was worse than feeling as they did feel, as if they were plunged in boiling water. It is generally only the very poor who know that the sensations of extreme heat and extreme cold are precisely alike.

It was half-past ten when Isola Amoretta moved up in front of one of the theatres. She had a numb consciousness in her frozen mind that she did not dare go home until the boxes were sold, and so she dragged her small but heavy legs up under the blazing arc of light just as the doors were opened and the press of the crowd began. She saw a man in plain clothes speak to the policeman on duty as she approached, but took no great heed of that, and began her particularly disagreeable whine of "M-a-a-atches, ma-a-a-tches, three for fi' cents," as soon as the first rush of the crowd began. "See here," said the man in plain clothes, as Isola Amoretta raised her cry, "that child's the biggest pest on Chestnut Street. I don't know

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where the beggar detective is, or why he don't attend to his duty, but if she ain't taken in right now, I'll make trouble for somebody."

"'Sh!" said the officer, "she'll run." He made a cautious step to where Isola Amoretta, shrilling her small cry, was tossing like a tiny cork in a sea of pushing knees and elbows. There was the jingle of an approaching car down the street as he did so.

A wild fusilade of snapping match-heads began on the pavement. Isola Amoretta had dropped all her boxes as she saw the outstretched arm of the man of the law. There was a shriek of a hundred voices in a hundred keys and accents. "Take care, child, take care!" A curse, a shout of "Whoa!" a quick clatter of horses' feet, reined sharply on the stones, and then a long, shuddering cry, which was weird and gruesome and bore no resemblance at all to Isola Amoretta's particularly disagreeable whine. The car went on when the commotion was over, and the women who had fainted at the sickening sight and sound recovered sufficiently to journey homeward in seats which happened to be directly over the bloodstained wheel.

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If Miss Cabell reads the paper very carefully this morning, which is not likely, she will see this brief note: "Isola Amoretta Crawford, who was run over by a Chestnut Street car at 10:30

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last night, died an hour afterward at the Pennsylvania Hospital." It is still less likely, even if she reads the paragraph, that she will see in it any connection with Hans Andersen's improbable story of the little match girl.

The Hat that Jim Bought



THE town, or the men **A Study of the Best Bit in the Colonial Quarter** about it, had distinctly refused to wear blue hats with silver bands. This had been pointed out to Blockitt of Chestnut Street by his head clerk before he made the investment. But Blockitt had an eye for color, and was a man of original ideas, as he had pointed out to his head clerk in return. "Won't go in Philadelphia?" he had said. "Well, then, we'll make them go. It's only by making things go in Philadelphia that I am what I am."

Nevertheless, they had not gone. They could not be made to go. Millington Reeves had been induced to accept one "on trial" (Millington Reeves got all his clothes that way, being an Admirable Crichton), in the hope of making them go in the Proprietary Club. But if Millington Reeves had made a trial, it had not been in public, and the effect upon the brass hat rack of the Proprietary Club was inappreciable. To be sure, the fashion column of the *Era* had commented, in that off-hand touch-and-go style which is the finality of puffery, on "Blockitt's latest audacity." But not

even the commentator, who had a blue and silver "on trial" (he got all his clothes in that way too), would wear it, being deterred therefrom by the example of the Proprietors. So Blockitt charged \$2.25 loss to each of the blue and silvers, and sold them to Cohen of South Second Street for 75 cents apiece. Blockitt could have sold them from his window at \$1.50 each, as Cohen did, but then this would have ruined Blockitt's vogue. So the blue and silvers hung in long rows in Cohen's window, with the \$1.50 mark in straight and shiny black and red letters, and the neighborhood was certainly proud of them. In Pennell's Court there was nothing else talked about.

Now that Pennell's Court should fall down and worship this apotheosis of Blockitt's *bizarrierie* was irony in taste and history, for, as Sidney Black-anwyte had repeatedly told the Sketch Club, Pennell's Court was the best bit in the colonial quarter. At the river-front end of Spruce Street it lay, that thoroughfare which runs so singularly down from high gentility through shabby gentility to poverty, and from poverty to squalor. The narrow archway by which you entered it pierced the wall of two high-shouldered houses, whose foundations were older than the longest pedigree in the Proprietary Club, and the walls themselves were of that black and red brick which was glazed in and imported from Holland. Moreover, when the Court was excited—when Big Liz's Joe, the "spar-

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rer" at the Olympic, had been beating her, or Longshoreman Jim Rawlings "had a periodical," for example—this narrow little slit in the colonials lighted up amazingly. Then the Courtiers swarmed out on the uneven cobble-stones of the narrow gutter between the six little houses on one side of the Court and the six little houses on the other. The Pole (they called him a Polander), who, they said, was starving his wife to death in No. 7, came out in his high boots and long cavalry mustache; the voodoo woman in No. 4 flitted about like a dusky bird-of-paradise in her gay turban; the shabby splendor of Leary George, the out-of-luck burglar's habiliments, lent its touch of seedy fashion to the scene. The Rhinestone stud on the bosom of the Split Onion's bartender shone effulgent from its tobacco-stained background. When finally the nickel-plated acorn on the top of Officer 978's gray helmet bobbed threateningly through the archway, the tableau was complete, and Pennell's Court undoubtedly the best bit in the colonial quarter.

Nevertheless the Courtiers turned away from their own picturesqueness and worshipped the blue and silver hats. Big Liz bought one for her Joe. The bartender of the Split Onion always wore one when he filled Big Liz's beer-kettle. Leary George, who was *blasé* and cynical and inclined to scoff at this infection of the Court, had promised himself one in secret as soon as his scent should

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grow a little cooler in police nostrils. Little Jim Rawlings had set his heart on wearing one to St. Chrysostom's picnic. But it seemed on a certain hot morning in the month of July, when the slops were almost too languid to flow in the gutter, that little Jim's hopes were blasted.

"Father," he cried (and the inflection of despair was wonderful enough in its intensity for Casabianca)—"father, oh, father, do you s'pose you will be sober by three o'clock? Oh, father, can't you tell what you did with them?"

Longshoreman Jim Rawlings' head lolled on his breast. He shook it for an instant, as if in an effort to respond, and then, the fumes of the Split Onion's tap reasserting themselves in all their might and majesty, a drugged, sodden snore was the answer to his son's appeal.

Little Jim desperately threw open the door of No. 3, his father's home and his own.

"Liz," he cried passionately—"oh, Liz, do you s'pose you could waken him? Oh, Liz, he's hocked the shoes I had to black."

The tallow-faced girl who sat on the grimy doorstep opposite and pressed a straight black fringe of greasy hair against her aching head turned her round bold eyes at the boy. "Ye'll do no good with him till he's slept it off, Jimmy. Ye're a fool not to tell the Cruelty, and have them put him in the Correction."

Little Jim sat down despairingly on his own

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door-step. Then a dart of terror quickened his despair, and he sprang to his feet. "Liz," he cried, "do you s'pose they'll put me in the Correction?—for gettin' away with the shoes, I mean."

The girl looked up again and answered dully, "In the Refuge, more likely."

Little Jim arose and paced the floor. It was drolly tragic.

To the girl on the opposite door-step it was simply superfluous. "Jimmy," she called roughly, across the Court, "what's the use o' goin' to a Sunday-school? His Whiskers will square it for ye."

Liz had learned something from the charitable efforts that had been made in her behalf. She knew to a feather's weight how much the camel's back of philanthropy would bear. In her case it had been broken long ago, but the burden that little Jim had ever imposed on it she knew was light. His Whiskers was the incumbent of the mission of St. Chrysostom, where little Jim went to Sunday-school, sang in the choir, and had hopes of picnicking in a blue and silver hat.

The boy stopped in his walk. If any one could help him in his present plight, he knew it was the missionary. Mr. Larremore was not like the other missionaries whom Pennell's Court had known. He was bluff and off-hand, and joked on his visits nearly as freely as Latham, the special officer or

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ward detective, only his jokes were not of the same kind. The Courtiers did not know that he had left the Proprietary Club and the other end of Spruce Street for the sake of them and their kind; but they knew he was a gentleman, and took to him as the poor do to gentlemen. Besides, little Jim thought the missionary's shoes were among those which had been intrusted to him to blacken, and which his father had in some manner, which he could not in the present nor the immediate future disclose, made away with in the course of his debauch. It was necessary at least to acquaint him with his individual loss. Little Jim placed a chair under the side of the paternal anatomy which was most in danger of toppling from the bench to the floor, and, closing the door of No. 3, set out down the squalid Court and under the colonial archway for the mission of St. Chrysostom. As he passed under the shadow of the clock tower of gray old Second-Street Market, his eye fell once again on the blue and silver hats in Cohen's window. He averted his face. There was, he knew, a gulf between them and him. It mattered little whether or not his trousers wore clear through before the picnic day.

The missionary was in the guild-room when the lad climbed the narrow stairs and told his story. He mused a moment, looked out of the window across shabby Swanson Street, and then, his face lighting with what seemed to be a half-humorous

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recollection, answered, in his off-hand, man-of-the-world way: "I believe I know where those shoes are, Jim, and I believe Latham and I can get them. Come along."

Five minutes afterward the missionary, with the boy behind him, stood before the house sergeant's desk in the Second District Police Station. An old moustache, with the red stripe of army service on the sleeve which was not empty, gave a cheery good-morning from his place of authority. "Which of the flock is it we have, your Reverence?" he asked. "Father Riordan has one of his out already. It's hard when the old boy downs both of you gentlemen in one day."

The old moustache laughed. He had a police contempt, kindly in his case, but thorough withal, for all efforts toward the humanization of what in police parlance he classified as "bums."

"You've none of mine, sergeant," answered the missionary, good-humoredly. "Perhaps it would be better if you kept them all out of harm for me. Where's Latham?"

"He's in the lieutenant's room," the sergeant answered, and in another moment Larremore was in consultation with the detective.

Latham thought it was quite probable—more than probable, in fact—that Levison, the second-hand shoe man, had the missing goods. "He'd stop at nothing, that sheeny. It was more likely him than a pawn-shop, for the brokers is more

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careful, knowin' we're onto 'em." At any rate, he would be glad to go with Mr. Larremore and the boy and see. So off the three posted, the fat detective keeping the long-legged priest's pace with difficulty, and Little Jim running breathlessly behind, till they reached a basement on South Street, into which Larremore dived, his companions following.

"Good-morning, Mr. Levison," he said pleasantly.

The bent old cobbler looked up nervously, and then covered with his apron a pair of shoes which he had been examining.

"I see you have my ties there," the clergyman went on urbanely. "You bought them from this boy's father when he was drunk. Jim, step up and identify the other property."

Little Jim's reddened eyes had been busy about the damp little hole while the clergyman was speaking. "There's Mr. Duglison's gaiters," he cried gleefully, "and Captain Marrable's tops, and young Mr. Trenwith's cricket shoes—I know the very mud."

So he went on down the list, and saw in the shop every article of the missing footgear, except Mr. Conway's laces.

"Gather them up," said the clergyman grimly.

Levison made an uproar. All those shoes had come from different places, so help him! He had been to a dozen different back gates for them.

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He had never in his life set eyes on a pair corresponding with the description of the ones said to be missing. Latham was a little staggered by the old man's protestations. When they came to an end, the missionary spoke:

"You don't know me," he said. "You've forgotten the trade you did with my man, eh? Latham," he said, turning to the detective, "before I put on the cloth, he and my valet lived on my boots for a year."

The old thief was silenced, and having received Latham's compliments and a facetious proposal for an exchange of functions in life, the missionary strolled homeward with little Jim.

"You're in business, Jim," he said, "just as much as if you had a big shop with plate-glass windows, and your commercial honor must remain unimpeached—you understand?" Little Jim hugged his bundle of leather and laughed gayly. "This being the case," continued Larremore, "you must make good to Mr. Conway for his shoes. As I was your sponsor, I presume I will have to help you out. Now I should think those shoes may have cost eight dollars, and they were about half worn out, you say. I think four dollars ought to satisfy him, don't you?" Little Jim nodded assent rather gloomily. The blue and silver hat had danced once again into his vision when the missionary conjured the shoes back into his possession. He had had a vague expectation that from

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some other basement the missionary would charm the missing pair. The blue and silver hat danced again out of sight. "Yes, sir," he said at last, "I ought to pay him."

"Spoken like a man of probity, Jim," said the missionary. "As your backer, I think it devolves upon me to arrange the affair. I will see Mr. Conway, and advance the sum necessary for you to liquidate. Then I shall expect you to pay me."

"Yes, sir," said little Jim again, repressing a sob. Alas for the hat and the picnic! they were quite out of sight now. The missionary smiled down at the boy. "And I say, Jim," he said, "the picnic is postponed a month. We can't get the cars during the midsummer rush."

Captain Marrable's tops and young Trenwith's cricket shoes tumbled out into the gutter; the blue and silver danced again into the range of little Jim's vision.

"Mr. Larremore," he gasped, standing still on the curb, "I'll never miss another rehearsal."

"Mind you stick to that," the clergyman answered with a laugh. "There's a new Kyrie to learn next week"; and spying the swarthy little Padrone of the Virgin of Pazzi in Marriott's Lane, returning from a round of parochial calls, he joined him, and began anew a bantering argument on Mariolatry, which was always revived when the two met.

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The blue and silver was often in little Jim's reach during the month of vicarious atonement, and often out of it. Longshoreman Jim paid half of the four dollars himself, in a fit of remorse, when he heard his son's story. Then he had another "periodical"—the "periodicals" were shortening down to a "habitual." Little Jim's wages went to make out the rent that week, and if he had not been helped to a large invoice of wilted heliotropes and pansies through Mr. Larremore's acquaintance with a fashionable florist, all hopes of blue and silver would have fled. The flowers went in five-cent bunches, and the debt was lessened by another dollar. By this time little Jim dreamed as often of the hat as of his mother, whose funeral had been one of Mr. Larremore's first offices in the mission of St. Chrysostom. He stood so frequently in front of Cohen's window that Cohen took him for a burglar's spy, and ordered him off the sidewalk. The hats got into little Jim's catechism, and when Miss Flutterthwait, a fair coadjutor of Larremore's, whose devotion to St. Chrysostom's was not altogether impersonal, put the question, "What desirest thou," etc., "in this prayer?" he answered, "One of Cohen's—oh, excuse me, teacher. 'I desire,' " etc. When Big Liz's Joe smashed the crown of his blue and silver, and Liz pitched it into the gutter, Little Jim secured it; and though it was three sizes too large for him, wore it while he

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blackened the boots. Leary George had come into luck at the end of the third week of the month, and departed with one of the coveted "cadies," as he called them, on his oily hair. It blunted Jim's moral sense a little to see this victory, and for an hour he looked up to the burglar as much as the rest of the court did. But when he considered that Mr. Larremore was as clever at recovering stolen goods—hadn't Latham said as much?—as Leary George was at stealing them, his faith was once more assured. All sorts of questions presented themselves to him when in imagined possession of the hat. Suppose it should rain some day next fall when he was on his way home from the mission, would the blue run into the silver, or would it do to put it under his coat, where nobody could see it? Suppose his father should sell it when he was drunk? Suppose—oh, suppose that the hats should be all gone by the time that he had the money?

It was on the very night before the picnic that little Jim, in an awed and chastened frame of mind, crept into Cohen's just before the wire screen was going over the windows, and laying a tattered dollar bill, two ten-cent pieces, and six nickels on the counter, pointed a grimy little forefinger at *them*. There were no children's sizes; and the small man's hat which Jim finally secured was a world too wide, but he stuffed paper between the leather inside band and the blue felt, and when

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the morning sun began once more its daily task of breeding fever in Pennell's Court, little Jim waked and saw that his prize had not vanished, as he had dreamed, in the night, but shone in all its glory from the top of the heap of tattered clothing which he had laid off before going to sleep.

* * * * *

Little Jim's hat marked him as an object for attack as soon as he joined his ragged co-religionists at the mission. Reddy Benson, the long, lean, mischievous newsboy, who sang "Lead, kindly Light" with the same gentle modulation on Sundays as he did "aft'noon peppees" on week days, seized it off his head as soon as he had got seated in the train. He passed it around for inspection, and the train was fifteen miles out of Camden before little Jim got it back. Then Sarah Moneypenny, the shoe-string girl, who did not know how she got her old Quaker name, threw hard-boiled egg-shells in it when the scholars ate their lunch in the Atlantic City Excursion House. She was enabled to throw them because little Jim had the hat between his knees. He was afraid that it would blow off while his hands were engaged with St. Chrysostom's provender. The thought that it might blow off was in fact the mental theme of little Jim's day. It kept him from going out on any of the piers. It robbed his ride on the merry-go-round of half its fearful delight.

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The roar of the home-bound train was at its loudest, as the engineer put on full speed over a long stretch of straight track, and the missionary, whose mind was intent upon averting a possible danger to his flock by closing the rear door of the car, walked through the weary ranks of his infantry. Little Jim slipped out of his seat, and followed him down the aisle to where he stood for a moment watching, with his hand on the door-knob, the two long ribbons of steel unwinding from beneath the flying wheels, as from a loom.

"Mr. Larremore," Jim began; and as he did so the entrance of a brakeman at the front of the car sent a strong draught, from the train's swift wind of flight, down the aisle.

"You must go to your seat, Jim," said the missionary, rather sharply, and turning to moderate the rigor of the command with a smile, he saw a white, terror-stricken little face appealing up to him, and a vanishing speck in the red dust and the hot twilight—the blue and silver hat. Then the boy was gone.

The air hissed sharply into the brakes. The locked wheels groaned on the sanded tracks. The long train stopped in half its own length. But a little way back from the last platform Larremore and the conductor, followed by a mob of screaming children and pallid teachers, found on the track a crumpled little heap of tattered, blood-stained clothing. There was life there yet. The

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boy's eyes looked up to the missionary's, bent close to his, with an appealing trouble in them.

"Quick!" said Larremore, divining, as a soul's physician can, the trouble in the eyes. From the railroad ditch whence a frightened scholar plucked it the hat was passed to the centre of the group. The crown was cracked and the rim was bent. A huge daub of the red Jersey mud obscured the splendor of the band.

The troubled eyes closed. A long sigh of infinite depth of defeat strained the bruised little breast. There was a slight writhing of the tiny, broken limbs.

Two equally battered and inanimate objects lay quiet side by side on the West Jersey track—little Jim and his blue and silver hat.



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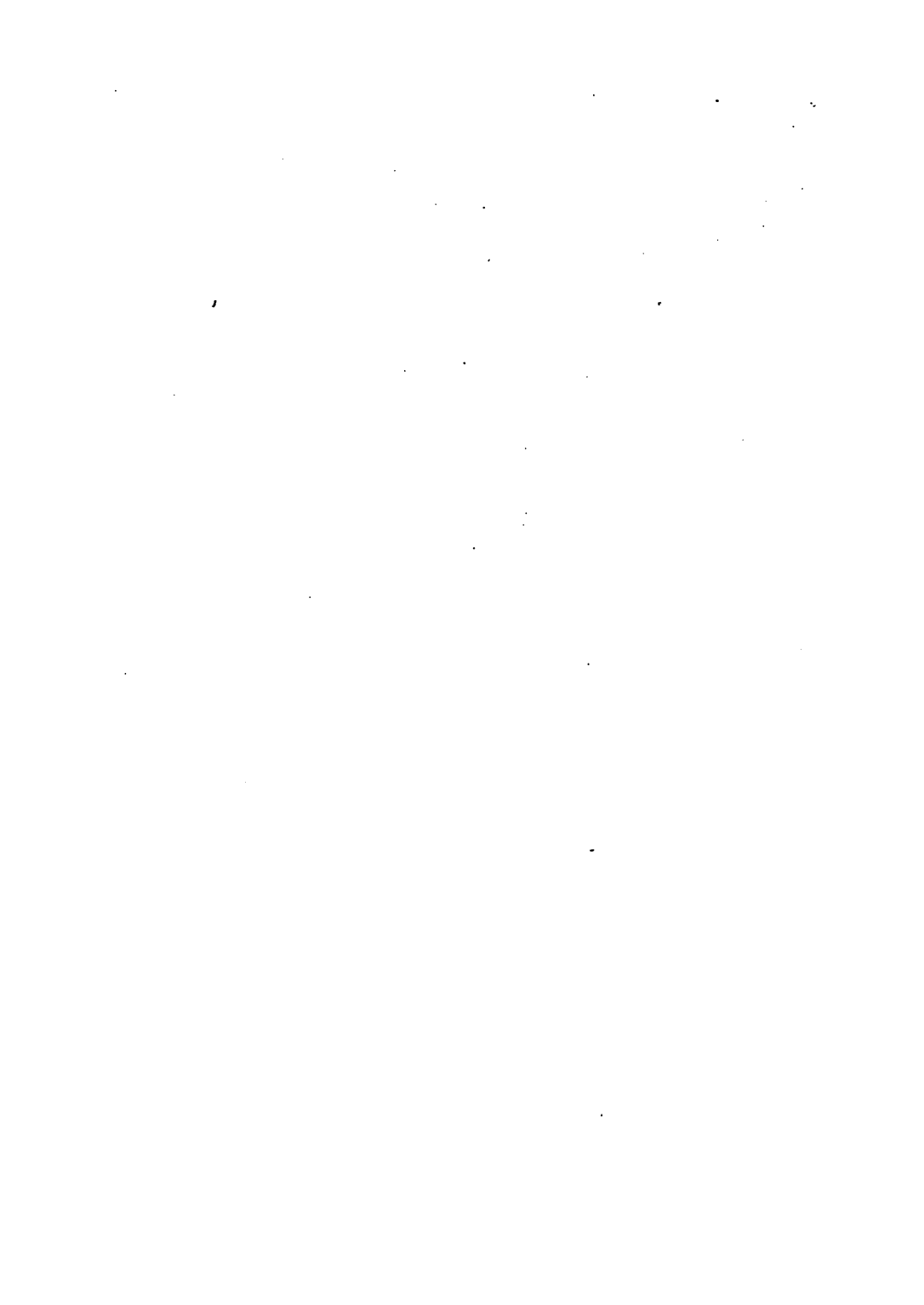
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